A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 22 NOVEMBER 1985
95p

CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM



THE ZOIDS ARE COMING!

Will they take the planet by force? We look at MARTECH's exciting new project for Christmas

SPECTRUM

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

COMPETITIONS GALORE

WIN! WIN!


ocean
SOFTWARE PROJECTS
ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME
U.S. GOLD
They sold a MILLION
They sold a MILLION
DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON
Jet Set Willy
Sabre Wulf
BEACH-HEAD
Staff of Karnath
STAFF OF KARNATH REPLACES SABRE WULF ON THE COMMODORE 64
The Hit SQUAD
The Best Group of "HITS" in Game History
1st NOVEMBER 1985 RELEASE DATE
NOW ALL TOGETHER ON ONE GIANT COMPILATION
SPECTRUM
AMSTRAD
COMMODORE 64
SPECIAL DOUBLE CASSETTE
ONLY £9.95
DISC £12.95
Stocked at Selected Branches of:
W H Smith, Boots, John Menzies
Woolworth, Greens, Laskys and Rumbelows
from...
The Hit SQUAD
MORE FOR LESS
6 CENTRAL STREET, MANCHESTER M2 5NS TELEPHONE: 061-832 6633 TELEX: 669977



An Andrew Spencer / Elite Joint Production
Previously available only from Commodore U.K. for the CBM64, the author Adrian Spencer and Elite now combine to bring you the 'spectacular'
COMING SOON
International
BASKETBALL
For SPECTRUM £5.99 and AMSTRAD £5.99
GAME FEATURES
• Furious non-stop action with one or two-player feature.
• Realistic animation with jump, block and steal manoeuvres. You can even jump and turn in mid-air before slamming the ball into the basket.
• Nine fierce skill levels from the utterly pathetic to the Harlem Globetrotter.
• Three fiery opponents with unique 'intelligent player' characteristics.
• Multisection game, with end-of-match presentation sequence.
• Sequel to immensely successful International Soccer.
CBM64 SCREEN SHOT
FLYERS
8
International Basketball is from Andrew Spencer author of the 'Sensational Best-Seller' International Soccer.
Every single 'Elite' product carries the unique 'Elite' Holographic Sticker. Make sure your copy does. It's your guarantee of quality.
Mail Order
Just send a cheque or P.O. payable to 'Elite' or quote your Visa number.
An Andrew Spencer
Elite
-Joint Production
Elite Systems Limited Anchor House Anchor Road Aldridge Walsall West Midlands Telephone (0922) 55852 Telex 335622 SPETEL G



TAKE A TRIP INTO THE
PLEASUREGAME
FRANKIE
GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
Plus
FREE!
SPECIAL LIVE RECORDING OF
RELAX
ocean
WAKELIN
AN EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE
SPECTRUM 48K
9·95
COMMODORE 64
In exclusive data-tune© twin cassette pack.
Ocean Software is available from selected branches of:
Boots, WHSMITH, John Menzies, WOOLWORTH, LASKYS, Rumbelows, Greens,
Spectrum Shops and all good software dealers. Trade enquiries welcome.
Ocean House · 6 Central Street · Manchester · M2 5NS · Telephone 061 832 6633 · Telex 66



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE No 22 NOVEMBER 1985

FEATURES

DO IT YOURSELF

REGULARS

Next month's CRASH goes on sale from 21 November, not having a copy is like asphyxiating — slooowly . . .

Publishing Executive
Roger Kean
Editor
Graeme Kidd
Technical Editor
Franco Frey
Art Editor
Oliver Frey
Production Designer
David Western
Production Assistants
Gordon Druce
Matthew Uffindell
Software Editor
Jeremy Spencer
Adventure Editor
Derek Brewster
Sub Editor
Sean Masterson
Staff Writer
Lloyd Mangram
Contributing Writers
Chris Passey, Robin Candy, Ben Stone, John Minson, Mark Hamer, Gary Liddon, Julian Rignall, Gary Penn
Client Liaison
John Edwards
Subscription Manager
Denise Roberts
Mail Order
Carol Kinsey

CRASH Magazine is published monthly by **Newsfield Ltd,** 1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire

☎ Subscriptions **0584 5620**
☎ Editorial/studio **0584 5851**
☎ Advertising **0584 5851**

Colour origination by Scan Studios, Wallace Road, London N1; Printed in England by Carlisle Web Offset (Member of the BPCC Group), Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria.
Distribution by COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE
Subscriptions: 12 issues £14.50 post included (UK Mainland); **Europe**, 12 issues £21.50 post included. Outside Europe by arrangement in writing.

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

ABC

MEMBER OF THE AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS

Cover by Oliver Frey



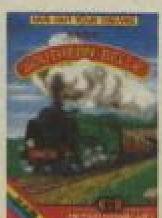
Those devious Seiddabs are mustering for another attack! Venture through a recently discovered series of stargates guarded by Seiddab fighters, and you'll find a system of named planetoids, each a part of the Seiddab war machine.

Your mission, in this totally original 3D adventure, is to explore these stargates and planetoids and rid them of the Seiddab menace, using an armada of fighters crewed by Astro Clones. In addition, a series of garbled messages tells you that a deadly Graviton Bomb lies hidden amongst the planetoids. Using all your skill and judgement, you must travel through the stargates to find its components and smash the master consul, closing the stargates forever. After a desperate journey through space, beam your clones down to cripple each planetoid by destroying its launch system. However, each landing holds a new surprise! Scattered around you must find everything from passcards to cryptic clues on a computer terminal to continue. There are also aliens and robots who could help or hinder your plans. Furrimal for instance, is partial to chocolate, while another needs a battery to be of any use. . .The list is endless! Your clone can pick up and store objects, turn and fire a laser– he can even throw objects across the room! Futuristic graphics plus unique sound through many different scenarios make this the ultimate space adventure movie.

For all 48K Spectrums £7.95



Heathrow ATC
Simulation
For all 48K Spectrums £7.95
Also available for the
Amstrad CPC 464 £7.95



Southern Belle
Simulation
For all 48K Spectrums £7.95

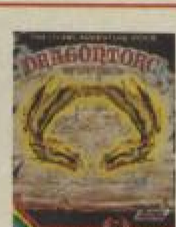
HEWSON CONSULTANTS

56b Milton Trading Estate, Milton, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RX.

For mail order send cheque/postal order made payable to Hewson Consultants. For credit card sales state your Access/ Barclaycard number and enclose a specimen signature. Don't forget to include your own name and address.



Avalon
Graphic Adventure Movie
For all 48K Spectrums £7.95



Dragontorc
Living Adventure Movie
For all 48K Spectrums £7.95
Also available for the
Amstrad CPC 464 £7.95

As part of our continuing development of innovative software we are always happy to evaluate software sent to us with a view to publication.

MICRO GAMES ACTION

KEPT IN THE DARK

WHO'D HAVE GUESSED it? What a cunning move on the part of Sir Clive — launching a 128K Spectrum in Spain, with a Spanish keyboard and some Spanish firmware.

The timing is interesting, as is the co-operation with a Spanish company, Investronica. According to the press release which confirmed the rumours that a Spanish 128K Spectrum was on the way, the new machine is "the result of a joint programme undertaken by the two companies over the last six months".

It's not surprising, given the grief handed out to Sinclair Research by the money men in The City, that the company has entered into partnership with a foreign company. The Spanish-speaking world represents a massive market for computers, and Spain's eagerness to buy up the Dragon when no-one else wanted can be seen as an indication of the desire for computer technology in Spain. And the deal must have been done at a time when confidence in Sinclair Research was at low ebb back in the UK. Lucky Investronica, lucky Spain!

Now Investronica will be building the 128K Spanish Spectrum, which will no doubt be sold not only in Spain but throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Britain will benefit, but it is the Spanish workforce that will be kept busy, and the Spanish balance of payments that will probably benefit most. Which is ironic, given the way in which Sir Clive was feted by the British Government and financial institutions until comparitively recently. Without being too jingoistic, it's a shame the Great British Boffin's 128K Spectrum couldn't have been financed and manufactured in this country — but then again, a few months ago Sinclair Research was on the verge of total collapse if some commentators were to be believed, and the City was, and probably still is, convinced that the home computer boom is over. The Spanish must view things differently.

But Sinclair is recovering from the summertime blues by all accounts. Apart from the slimming down operation and a few changes at the top, the major act of retrenchment was the abandonment of the Cambridge HQ — an award winning conversion of a Victorian mineral water factory. It's been a case of 'back to the Metalab, folks, while we work this one out'.

And it seems the problems the company faced **have** largely been worked out. The Dixon's Deal, bundling the Spectrum with a host of other goodies has taken care of the pile of stock that Sir Clive was left with at the start of the year, and the price cut on the QL has had a very positive effect on the level of its sales.

Sinclair Research's share of the home computer market in this country rose dramatically during August, according to one survey. The Spectrum Plus now accounts for over half the home computers sold — small wonder Sir Clive was reluctant to introduce a 128K version of the machine just yet. A spokeswoman told us that a 128K version might be on the UK market by Spring next year, but insisted there were no firm plans at the moment. And the policy from the PR point of view is to be as unhelpful about the Spanish machine as possible, it seems. English magazines won't be supplied with 128K machines for review by Sinclair — as far as the company's concerned, the machine is irrelevant in the UK.

Which it has to be, really. Imagine, if everyone knew that a 128K Spectrum was definitely going to be available in the Spring — for a price that would have to be around the £150/£170 mark to compete with the QL and Spectrum Plus — would the Spectrum Plus be the big seller at Christmas?

So it's not so surprising that the new machine was born abroad after all. It's unlikely that even the most enterprising importer will manage to get the Spanish 128K into this country, modify it and be able to sell it at a realistic price. Spectrum Plus sales will be safe over the Christmas period, with the 128K safely on holiday in Spain earning revenue in a whole new marketplace. Everyone at home, meantime, is kept in the dark ages of 48K.



ADVERTISERS' INDEX

INDEX TO GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE



This month we kick off with another new corner, a corner in which you can express your opinions at slightly longer length than Lloyd will let you in the FORUM. A sort of Hyde Park Corner in print . . . get on your soapbox and send in your rant, praise or purple passage. We'll even pay money (tea kitty willing) for pieces accepted for OPINION. This month, Cathy Foot has something to say about Microdrives.

MICRODRIVE REVISITED

Do you remember reading the following about eighteen months ago?

"EPIC LOGUE
Certainly the most exciting aspect of the ZX Interface 1 is the cheap and fast Microdrive storage system, which opens up a whole new world of adventure, and possibly, arcade games. It will be interesting to see what price level will be set for Microdrive cartridge software"
Franco Frey, CRASH May 1984

If you do, then you are probably a long term reader of CRASH and the owner of, dare I say it, a Microdrive?

Well, what have we seen released on cartridge in the last year or so, anything? Nothing? Not much. Let's face it, I cannot think of a single game issued on Microdrive first, and those that are available on both Microdrive and cassette are far and few between.

The reason I remember that article so well is that we have just decided to subscribe AND buy those back issues that we've missed due to depending on our local newsagent, and the May 1984 issue was one of those we missed. I therefore got to read the article I've quoted from here not at a time when we were considering buying the little beast, but when we have two of the brutes in the house — I think the highest number we've had at a time is five, last Christmas.

Remember Franco's words? He pointed out some of the possibilities . . . adventure games bigger and better than *The Hobbit* and *Valhalla*; less than nine seconds to wait before a game loads rather than up to four minutes. "No doubt", you read, "adventure game writers are, at this very moment, labouring away frantically at their first Microdrive epic and we will see some results in the near future".

So, what went wrong?

There ARE some games available both on tape and Microdrive nowadays, but I don't know of any that were issued first on Microdrive, nor any that are bigger or better on cartridge. One or two software houses do allow us to copy games to cartridge — Five Ways Software, for instance, trust us to copy *Rally Driver* to Microdrive, giving us the joys of fast access and an amazingly pleasant feeling of being trusted. Several firms provide utilities on cartridge as well as cassette — in fact most utilities can be acquired on cartridge . . . but not much in the way of games software.

Why is this? It seems there were two main problems facing the software houses last year, the first being that no-one was willing to risk entering an unknown market with, perhaps, too few buyers in it; secondly, and most important, was that by the time software houses felt that a sufficient number of Microdrives has been sold, they had discovered the worm in the apple.

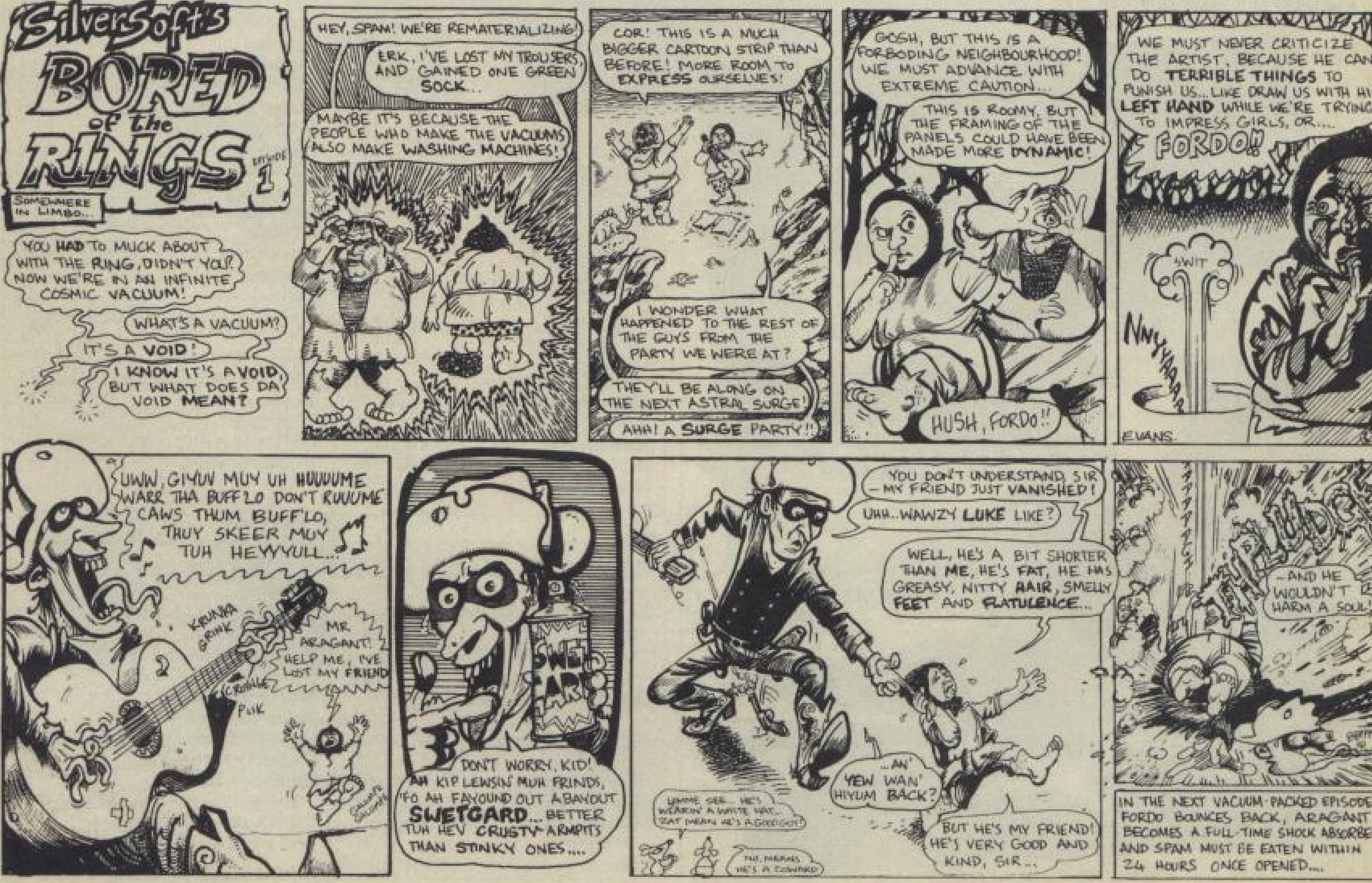
'Worm?' I hear you cry, 'What worm?' The worm of Sinclair's quality control department. If it doesn't work, send it back! Fine when you are buying items in ones, twos and threes, but what about a firm which buys several thousand Microdrive cartridges and has to send half of them back because they don't work. And what about the software house's quality control? Will they have to test EVERY cartridge they sell, or just pass the buck on to us, the consumer and run the risk of getting an unfair reputation for poor quality goods?

I spoke to Tim Langdell of **Softek**, which markets *The Artist* and *The Writer* on Microdrive at the PCW Show. He told me that, they arrived at the show on the Wednesday with four items on cartridge, three of which had failed by Saturday lunchtime.

Walking round the show, I enquired of other firms whether their games would be released on Microdrives, and they all expressed similar opinions to Tim's. (As it happens, I seem to have been lucky — apart from cartridge blow-ups due to passing electric trains and my own ham-fistedness — I have only had two duff cartridges in about a year.

I just wish firms would allow us to SAVE from cassette to Microdrive — but I suppose that would lead to an increase in piracy . .

Once more, however, we stand at the dawn of another era — again we watch in amazement at the unveiling of another LITTLE BLACK BOX for the Spectrum. The Mikro-Plus from Mikro-Gen. The same bursts of applause, the same hopes for more and better games are raised. This little box upgrades you Spectrum's memory to 64K by using a shadow ROM. AND programs which run with it can be transferred to Microdrive. If software houses begin to release games on the Mikro-Plus under licence, our Microdrives could see a new lease of life . . . .




ZOIDS
THE BATTLE BEGINS
Zoidstar is gripped by war.
Blue Zoid fights Red Zoid in a merciless battle for supremacy.
Mighty Zoidzilla, Blue Zoid combat leader, lies dormant in the hold of your craft, ready for you to climb into its command capsule to merge minds with the powerful machine and take control of this bitter confrontation. Somewhere in the desolate landscape, the Red Zoids lie in wait!
Landing preparations are complete. The descent begins.
The task which follows will take you to the very limits of your capabilities and imagination.
LIVE THE GAME. BECOME THE MACHINE!
Cassette: SPECTRUM 48K £7.95
ALL OTHERS £8.95
Disk: CBM 64 £14.95
Available from all leading software retailers OR order today by mail. Prices include postage and packing plus VAT.
martech
Martech is the registered trade mark of Software Communications Limited, Martech House, Bay Terrace, Pevensey Bay, East Sussex BN24 6EE
TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME.
PHONE: (0323) 768456
TELEX: 87465 EXIM Brighton
48K SPECTRUM • COMMODORE 64
BBC'B' • AMSTRAD • MSX • ATARI
TOMY

S • T • A • R •

A CRASH Smash

STAR-QUAKE

Producer: Bubble Bus
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Steven Crow**

Starquake from Bubble Bus sees the return of Steve Crow, programmer of the much acclaimed *Wizards Lair*. *Starquake* revolves around a small Bio-Logically operated being named Blob, who's been landed with the menial task of saving the universe from a savage destruction.

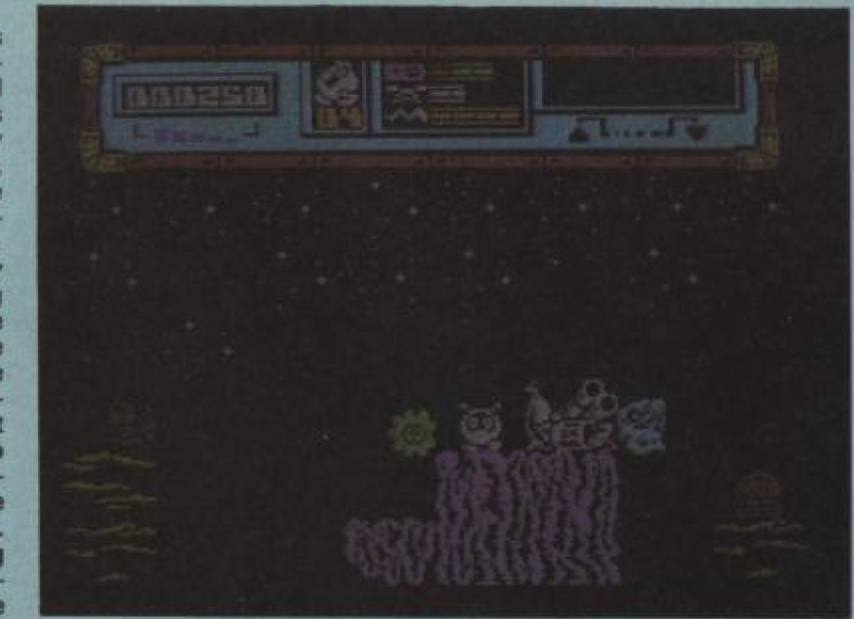
An unstable and potentially dangerous planet is emerging from a black hole somewhere among the backwaters of the galaxy. The planet is so unstable that it'll blow into a million fragments if its Planetary Core isn't fixed. If the planet does go kaboom then the whole universe will go up too in a massive chain reaction: a Starquake. Blob has the job of rebuilding the planet's core, thereby preventing disaster. You pick up the quest, controlling Blob, after his ship has crashlanded upon the planet in question.

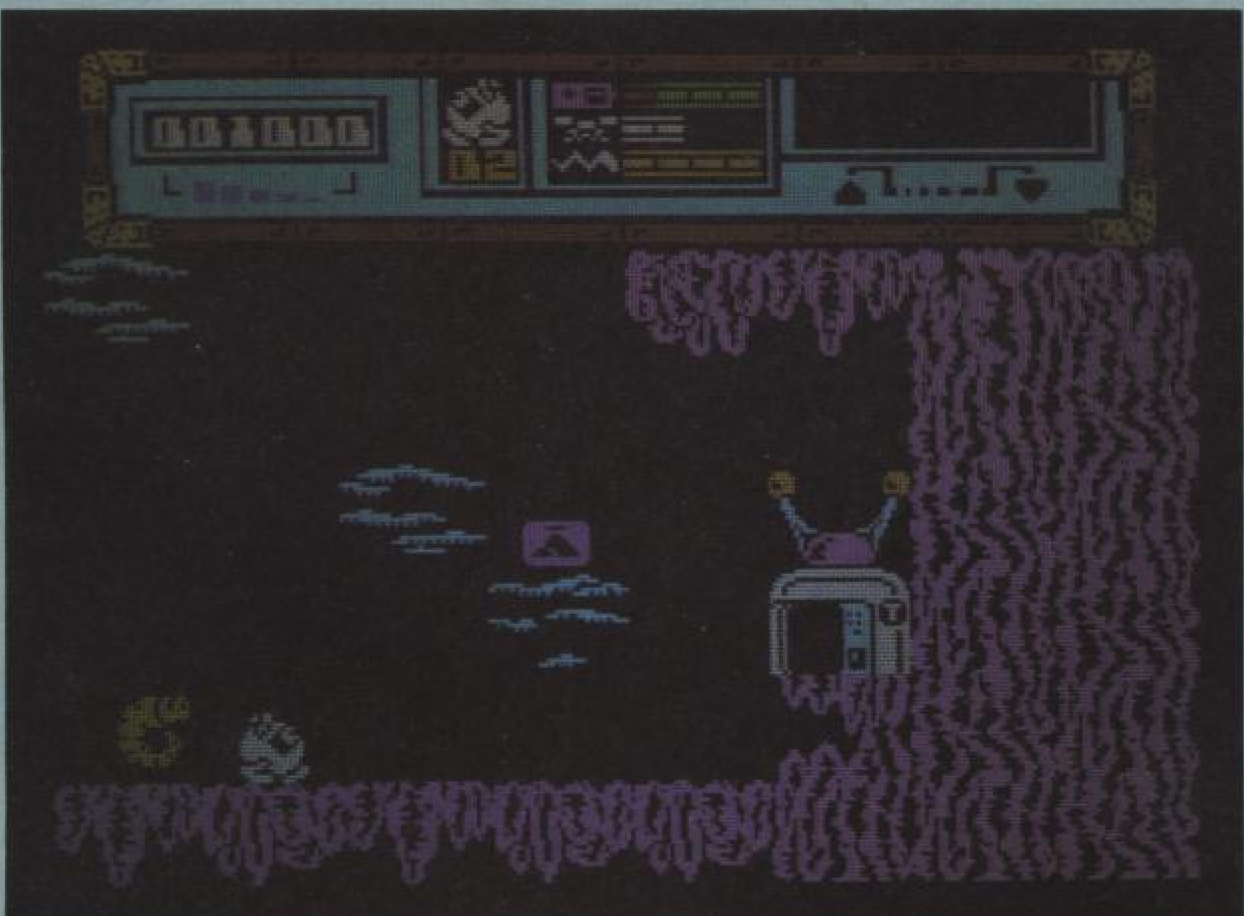
The game is presented in age old arcade adventure style. The screens flip between each other with the majority of the action taking place in a cave system below the planet's surface. Star of the show, Blob, is a creature of limited abilities who can go left and right and has a nice line in falling (for going down). Blob can go up too, using his platform laying device. Platforms can be used to prevent a fall or can be piled up to make a vertical stairway. One laid, they soon fade, however, crumbling to dust leaving Blob unsupported in mid air — unless he's hopped onto more solid ground meantime.

Blob enters the subterranean caves with four lives, a few platforms in stock for his laying device, a gun and some ammunition. A status display at the top of the screen provides readings on the amount of ammunition left and the number of platforms available for laying. A bar display next to a battery icon indicates Blob's energy level, which is reduced by collisions with the nasties. Should this dip below zero Blob expires and another droid has to be wheeled in. Packs of platforms, ammunition, and energy are scattered around the playing area, as are a few bonus lives. They are all picked up automatically as Blob runs over them. Collect supply packs to replenish stores, and the status display registers the improvement! Other useful objects have to be deliberately picked up and are added to the limited inventory which Blob can lug around at any one time. The status display also reveals what's been collected.

A veritable swarm of aliens inhabits the planetary caverns: contact with a nasty drains Blob's energy and while the aliens can be discouraged with a blast from the laser gun, avoiding them is also a good tactic. The nasties are all intelligent — some a lot smarter than others — and come to get you if you hang around. The further into the system you have penetrated, the smarter the nasties, it seems.

To rebuild the Planet's Core you need to collect various items and take them to the planet's centre. A teleport







·Q·U·A·K·E

system has been supplied to help you move around the vast complex of locations by the thoughtful Mr Crow. Six teleports exist throughout the planet each with their own password. When you enter a teleport, it informs you of its teleport code and asks for a destination code so it can transport you to another teleport booth. The teleport network is handy, though the clever thing is it only comes into its own once you've travelled the caves and have found the codewords to the six teleports.

Space Hopper Pads are also available which can be used to fly about on — the snag is, Blob can't pick up items while on a Pad, so frequent parking becomes a necessity. One-way transport in an upward direction is also provide by the Anti Grav Lifts. Decked out in a fetching green, the lifts can also provide an pleasant nasty-free haven as well as an effortless form of transport.

Barring your way to many essential core parts are security doors. To pass these barriers you'll need the key code card corresponding to the code of the door you want to pass. If, by chance you find a Flexible Whatsit it'll allow you pass any door but it's not reusable. The key code cards and flexible whatsits also work on Cheop Pyramids. The pyramids can be used to trade items in your inventory for more useful objects.

A whole range of devices and objects are scattered around the game, including secret passages, zap-rays, space locks and weird and wonderful artifacts, including Smash Traps – small bridges spanning some of the minor gaps in the cave system. These bridges cannot be passed from underneath, but if jumped on from a great height they yeild, breaking into little pieces and allowing free passage.

CRITICISM

●'This is one of the best games I've seen on the Spectrum for one hell of a long time. It has everything a brilliant game needs – superlative graphics, excellent sound, fabulous and unusual gameplay, real depth and addictive qualities. The game itself is really huge with heaps of screens to explore and map. There are also tons of alien things lying around which play an important part in the game and you have to discover what they do and how to use them. If you don't buy this game then your Spectrum isn't really being put to good use . . . miss it at your peril.'

●*Why are Bubble Bus games so rare? Perhaps some of them have slipped through my sticky reviewing claws, but to the best of my knowledge they haven't released a game since* Wizards Lair *which was ages ago. This game is an improvement on* Wizards Lair, *with better sound and graphics – it's a lot more playable and addictive. There are so many different nasties that do different things to you that you lose track of which are the nastier nasties. All the graphics are very well animated, with no attribute clash at all and the game is full of little tunes which are surprisingly good. I love all the little surprises built into the game and I'm completely addicted to* Starquake. *I can't see myself putting it down until I'm convinced I can complete it.'*

●'After the worthy *Wizard's Lair*, Bubble Bus have surely come up with a worthy successor with *Starquake*. I'd definitely rate this as an all time great. *Starquake*'s main appeal lies with its design. It's so well thought out. The graphics are very good indeed, both the movement and backgrounds. The content of the graphics is amazing – they don't get very repetitive even over the 512 screens. Though the game is very Ultimatesque you soon find that things are a lot more professional, taking the route that ACG should have gone presentationwise. Overall one of the best Spectrum games to date, both from a gameplay and technical point of view. Well worth a place in your games library.



COMMENTS

Control keys: O Left, P right, A down/lay bridging platform, Q up/pick up object, M fire, break-space continuous pause. Also definable
Joystick Kempston, Cursor and Interface 2
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: avoids attribute problems really well, excellent
Graphics: varied without much repetition. Very attractive
Sound: excellent, lots of little tunes
Skill levels: one
Screens: 512
General rating: one of the best Spectrum games currently available

Use of computer:	95%
Graphics	96%
Playability	94%
Getting started	94%
Addictive qualities	95%
Value for money	92%
Overall	**96%**

M•A•R•S•P•O•R•T

MARSPORT

Producer: Gargoyle Games
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Authors: **Greg Follis, Roy Carter**

Gargoyle Games have (temporarily?) abandoned the distant past jumping to the distant future as a setting for their latest game. *Marsport*, the first in a trilogy of games, begins at a time when the human race is having problems with a race of evil aliens.

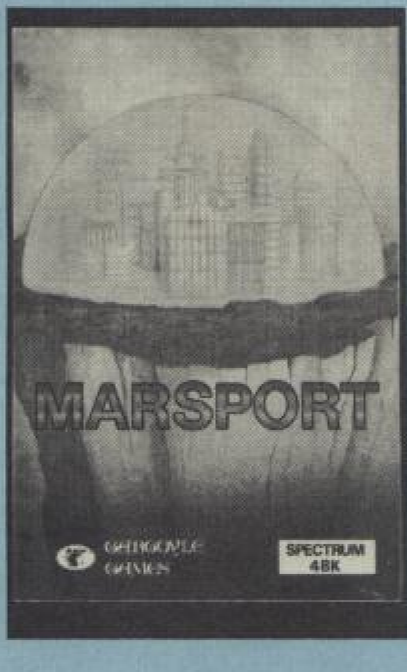
The Earth and Moon are defended from the xenophobic alien race known as the Sept by a massive spherical force shield in space. The problem is, the Sept have discovered a way of breaching the field. Deep within the central computers of Marsport, now a Sept stronghold, are the original plans for the construction of the barrier which detail how it can be reinforced. They were hidden there by the barrier's creator, Muller, who is now dead.

You play the character Commander John Marsh, of the Terran underground liberation movement. Your mission is to locate the central computer in the Marsport complex, recover Muller's plans and then escape with them intact. Apart from the dangers presented by the aliens in occupation, you have to cope with the computer generated defence systems. Standing at the entrance to the spacefield, your first task is to locate and then charge a weapon, without which your mission is certainly hopeless.

Sept warriors patrol the corridors of Marsport they are aliens about half your size who are deadly to the touch. In some passages you may find a Sept of the Warlord caste. They are large insect looking creatures who move only occasionally. If you should approach one, without having the right weapon to hand, a sting will lash out and — curtains.

Although you are warned of approaching Sept, you can never be sure from which direction they will arrive. Your energy gun comes in very handy. . . . Warden and Herald robots, part of the computer run defence system, patrol the corridors. Herald robots become significant later in the game and are harmless, while Wardens tend to mistake you for a Sept and try to blow you away.

Movement in *Marsport* is similar to that in *Dun Darach*, in that the character is moved to the left or right, via control keys, and the view may be altered through ninety degrees. At first this is disorientating, a compass at the bottom of the screen can be used to help you keep your bearings.



Sliding panels can be found set into some corridor walls. They're labelled according to their function and open automatically when approached. **Supply** units do just that and are constantly replenished. **Lockers** are a safe storage device for items obtained (you may only carry up to three at a time). Sometimes these lockers are locked and you will have to put a certain object in the **Key** unit nearby in order to open the covering plate. **Refuse** units allow you to get rid of objects you no longer want — useful given that you can't drop anything, and remember, you can always throw away unpleasant things. **Power** units provide power for objects that need it, such as your weapon, and finally **Factor** units manufacture a new object from other objects placed inside them. Factor units are essential — some of the things you need to complete your mission do not even exist until you create them!

Rooms in the complex are identified by a nameplate above the door. Rooms with 'Danger' above them mean that there is something to be wary of inside, while 'Restricted' rooms cannot be entered until you have located the central computer. Consequently, once the first part of the game has been completed, a lot more of the playing area opens up. Many rooms need a specific key to open them . . . so a little careful thought is needed.

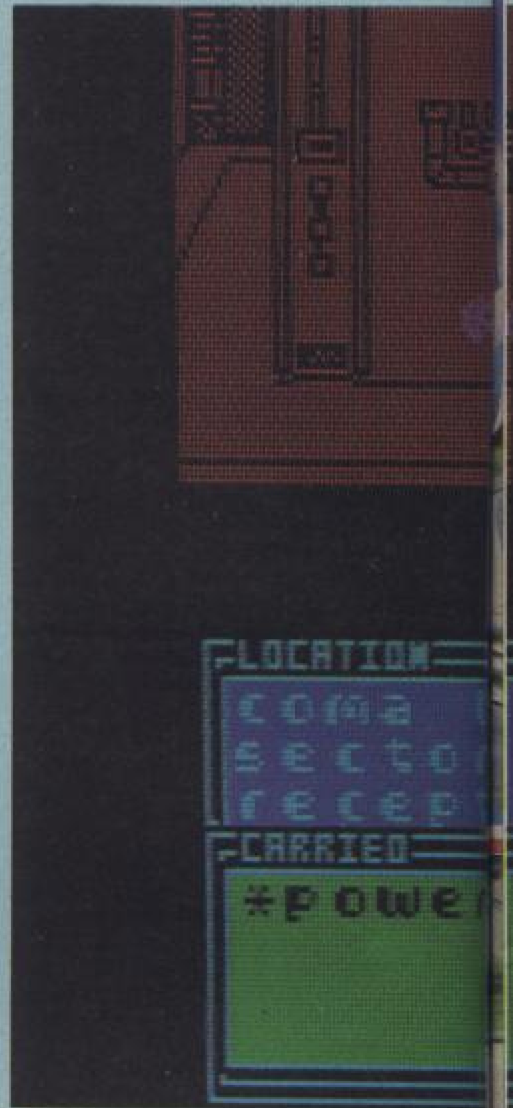
The main action takes place in the top half of the screen, whilst the bottom half gives compass directions, details of object carried, weapon status and messages. Messages are received when you pass a Vidtex unit or when you are in the process of constructing another object. The bottom half of the screen also gives details of the area you are in.

The playing area in *Marsport* is estimated at being the size of *Tir Na Nog* and *Dun Darach* put together. Not a little game! Unlike Gargoyle's previous two games, *Marsport* is not played on a flat plain. Instead, it is constructed like a 3D tower block. Each floor has a different function — for instance the Recreational area has a couple of little games that can be played. The levels are connected via a series of lifts that may or may not be one or two way.

Marsport features realistic 3D effects: John Marsh can stroll in front of and behind struts, and a lot of attention has been paid to the animation of his movements.

Unless you have a few weeks to spare, the game will need to be played in several sessions. Thoughtfully, Gargoyle have provided a save game routine — which can also be used just before you do something especially tricky in case things don't work out.

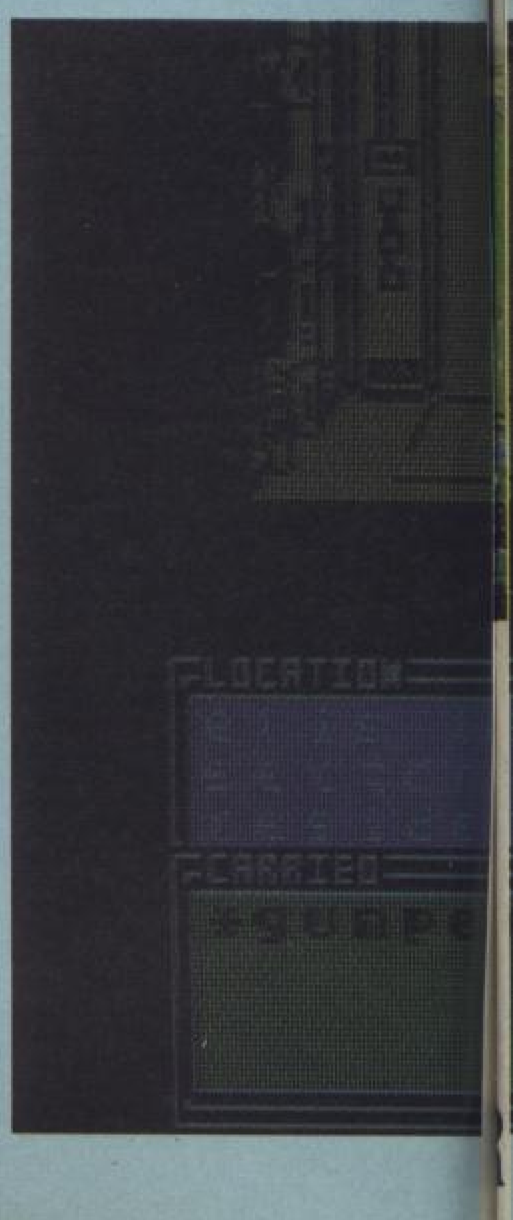
Once you do get the plans, the game isn't over — you still have to escape from Marsport. Not a trivial task, but this time, Gargoyle have added quite an interesting feature to the end...

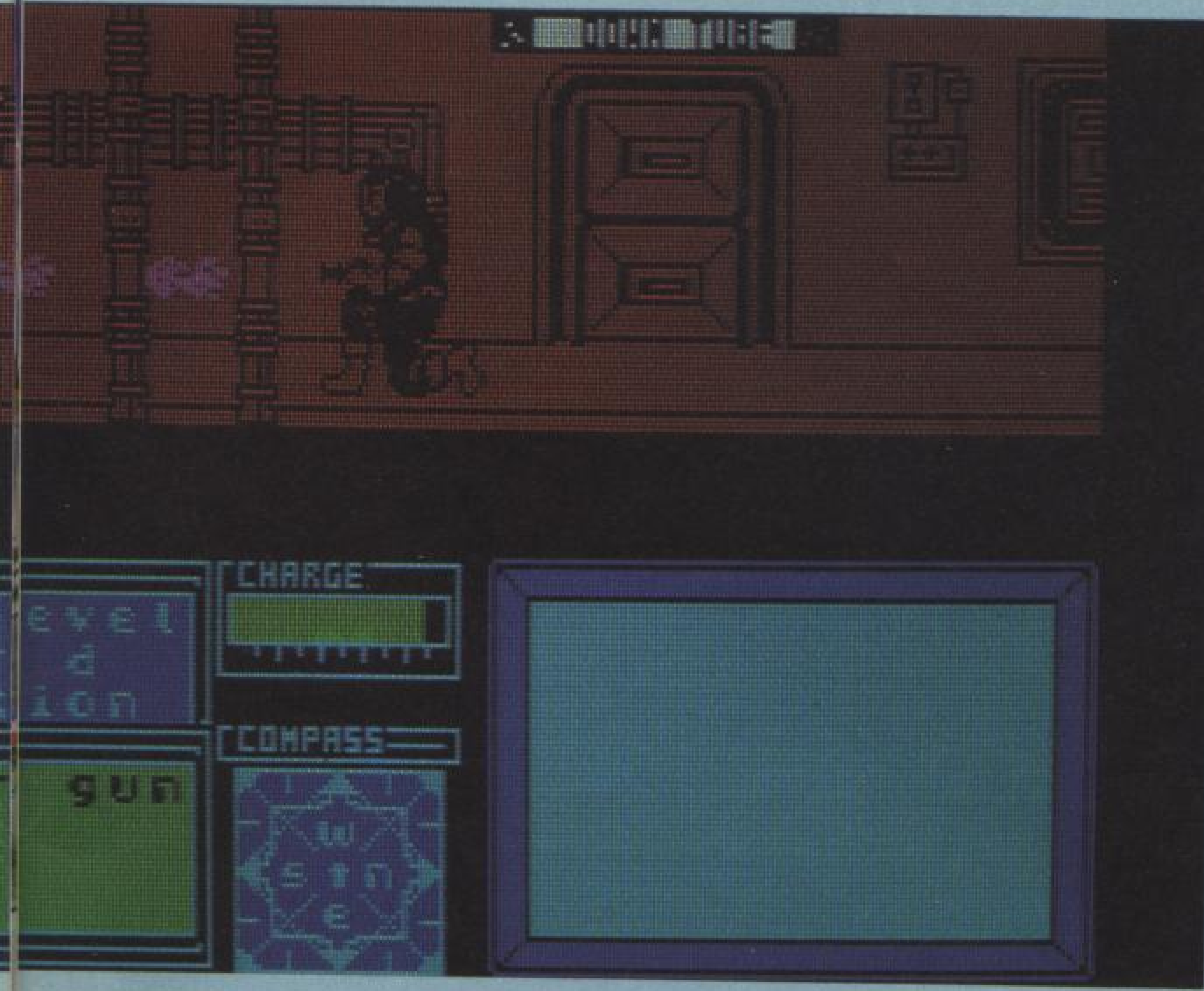


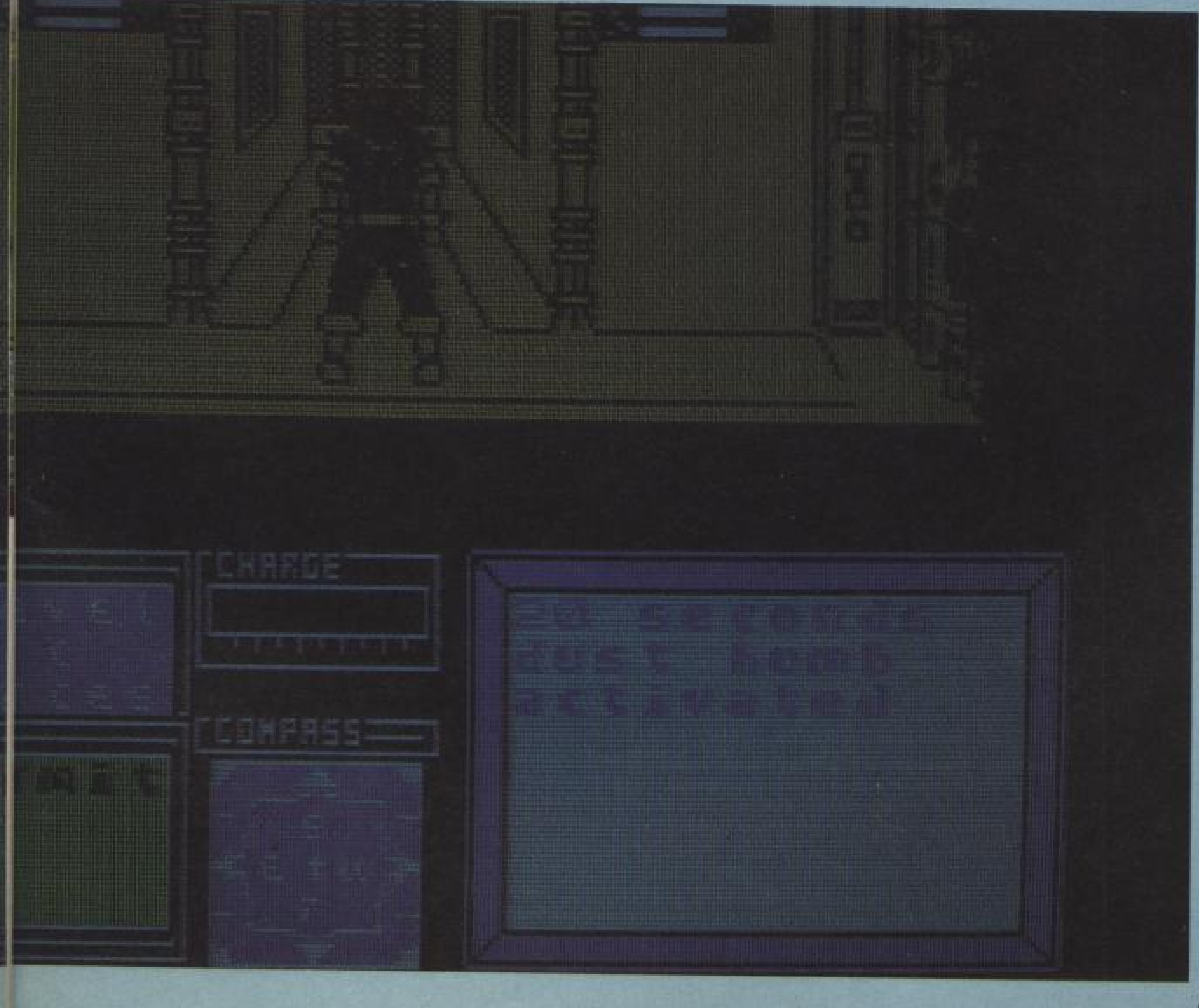
CRITICISM

● **'I thought *Marsport* was far better than previous Gargoyle games because there really is so much more to do. The game is about the size of both the others put together and with the fighting, which is one of the highlights of the game, and the atmosphere of being totally alone, the whole thing is very well paced indeed. The background given in the manual is both informative and interesting. I haven't solved *Marsport* yet but I'm already looking forward to the next two games. The only thing I thought could have been made clearer was the change in perspective, but you can get used to it and once you do, there's a lot of exploring to do.'**

● *'If you're an arcade adventure freak then you will absolutely love Marsport* but if you're a fast arcade gamester it may not appeal. Walking around the playing area can get a bit tedious







but once you have solved a few problems and got the gun the game really opens up. So if you think it is a bit boring just persevere and you will get hooked. The graphics are some of the best I've seen especially the aliens and John Marsh. Overall it is a good game. Though a bit hard to get into, Marsport *soon proves addictive.'*

● *'*Marsport *could be put down as just another* Tir Na Nog, *but once you start to get into the game you soon realise how much there is in there. We've come to expect great animated graphics from Gargoyle Games and* Marsport *is no exception to this. The main character of the game, John Marsh, looks a bit like Cuchulainn in a space suit but once he has got a gun in his hand he much deadlier than Cuchulainn ever was. If you like problem solving then you will love* Marsport. *This game adds an extra dimension because now you must actually build objects from other less important items in order to open doors or solve puzzles.* Marsport *can prove frustrating to begin with, but if you get over this initial frustration then you'll start to enjoy it.* Marsport *is another excellent game from Gargoyle Games and definitely worth buying, if you're a fan of this particular game format. Even if you're not, it's still fun walking around blasting the aliens.'*

COMMENTS

Control keys: Walk left/right (ALTERNATE KEYS ON BOTTOM ROW); Enter a door (ENTER); Camera left/right (ALTERNATE KEYS ON SECOND ROW); Pick up/drop (ALTERNATE KEYS ON THIRD ROW); Select object (2,3,7,8,9); Fire (CAPS SHIFT, SPACE); Autorun on/off (4); Freeze/unfreeze (5); Options (6)
Joystick: not applicable
Keyboard Play: average
Use of colour: good, no attribute problems
Graphics: excellent
Sound: not applicable
Skill Levels: one
Screens: huge scrolling playing area
General Rating: Marsport is another excellent contribution to the arcade adventure genre. It's similar to other Gargoyle games, but easily different enough to deserve a place in an arcade adventurer's collection.

Use of computer	86%
Graphics	94%
Playability	83%
Getting Started	87%
Addictive Qualities	95%
Value for money	95%
Overall	**95%**

FIGHTING WARRIOR



Producer: Melbourne House
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£8.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Stephen Cargill and Russell Comte (graphics)**

Hot on the heels of *Exploding Fist* comes Melbourne House's *Fighting Warrior*, yet another beat 'em up in true *Exploding Fist* style.

Fighting Warrior actually has a scenario which places you way back in the early Egyptian empire. You are a bit annoyed about the Pharoah's decision to bury your loved one alive as a sacrifice to the Gods. Acting as any mere near indestructible fighting machine would, you decide to rescue the Princess Thaya from the grisly death that awaits her.

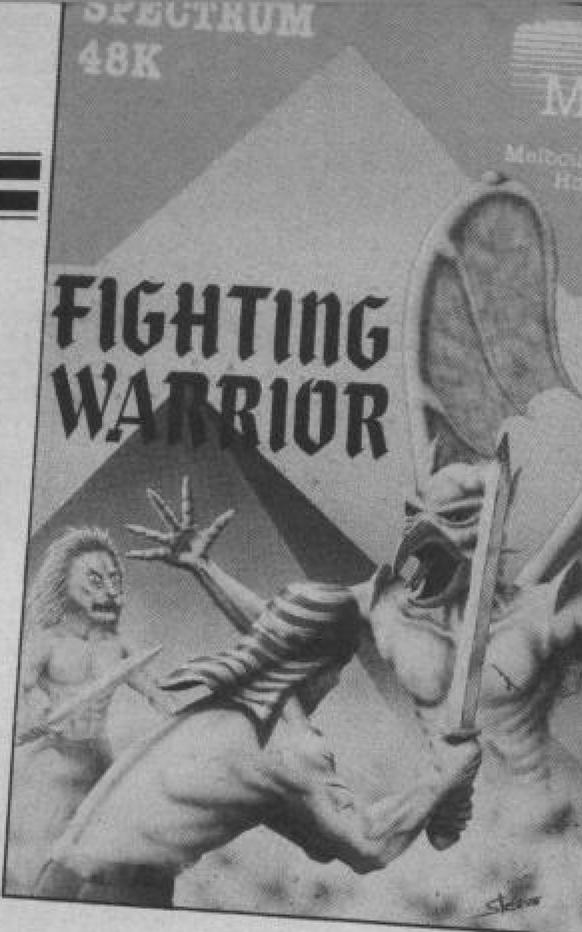
To reach the temple where the princess is imprisoned, you have to cross a desert beleaguered with a host of creatures conjured up by the Pharoah's court magician. You come across mythological demons, warriors and what can only be described as fighting gargoyles, each doing their best to block your way. As you progress the magician's resolve to stop you becomes greater, and he creates progressively more vicious opponents to replace those that you've vanquished.

Along your quest to free the one you love various objects will present themselves in your path. Left there for centuries, they possess mysterious mystical powers. To use them you'll need to employ some alternative thinking — and it's best to be sure that the magic they contain is good. Evil magic may bring great harm to you.

Once you've fought your way across the burning desert and entered the temple where you beloved is about to be sacrificed, your quest is not finished. A showdown with the court sorcerers follows. Sapping your strength and endurance they will do deadly battle and the only way to release the princess is to destroy them. Having done so, the path is free — your quest is over once you've unbound your loved one.

You are armed with a sword and start each combat sequence rejuvenated with your life force, represented by a row of chevrons along the bottom of the screen, replenished. During combat each hit from your opponent reduces your chevron supply. Similarly, the beast or warrior you are up against has a row of chevrons — and the first one to run out loses (and dies). To complicate matters a little, you also have to watch out for the occasional magical arrow which comes whizzing across the screen from right to left. If you don't duck or jump in time, and are hit by an arrow, two chevrons-worth of life force is





lost.

Fighting controls are accessed through joystick or keyboard using an understandably similar concept to *Fist*. The control keys or joystick used alone allow movement in four directions: jump, duck, back off and advance. Your repertoire of aggressive moves is a little simpler than in *Fist*. Pressing the fire button or key in conjunction with a direction gives you access to an upper strike, mid strike or lower strike.

You win ten points for every successful hit on you opponent and it's possible to collect a bonus score for making a very quick kill. Extra bonus points can be won by releasing some good magic from a pot — and of course there's a hefty bonus available when you complete the game.

As you progress along the scrolling landscape you fight in front of new scenery — all suitably Egyptian, full of pyramids, palm trees and the like. Not just violence for its own sake, (or saki?) this time there's a quest in there as well.

CRITICISM

● **'Unfortunately for this game, it is bound to be compared with Melbourne House's last release,** Exploding Fist. Fighting Warrior **introduces a bit of scenario into the genre, but remains a fighting game, and is one that can get a bit monotonous. All you seem to be able to do is fight your way from left to right, meeting yet another brilliantly animated opponent after each victory. Graphically the game is very attractive, with excellent animation, and there's no shortage of fighting to be done. It's a shame the variety is confined to your opponents — different weapons or moves might have jollied things up a bit. Bound to go well in any beat 'em up collection though!'**

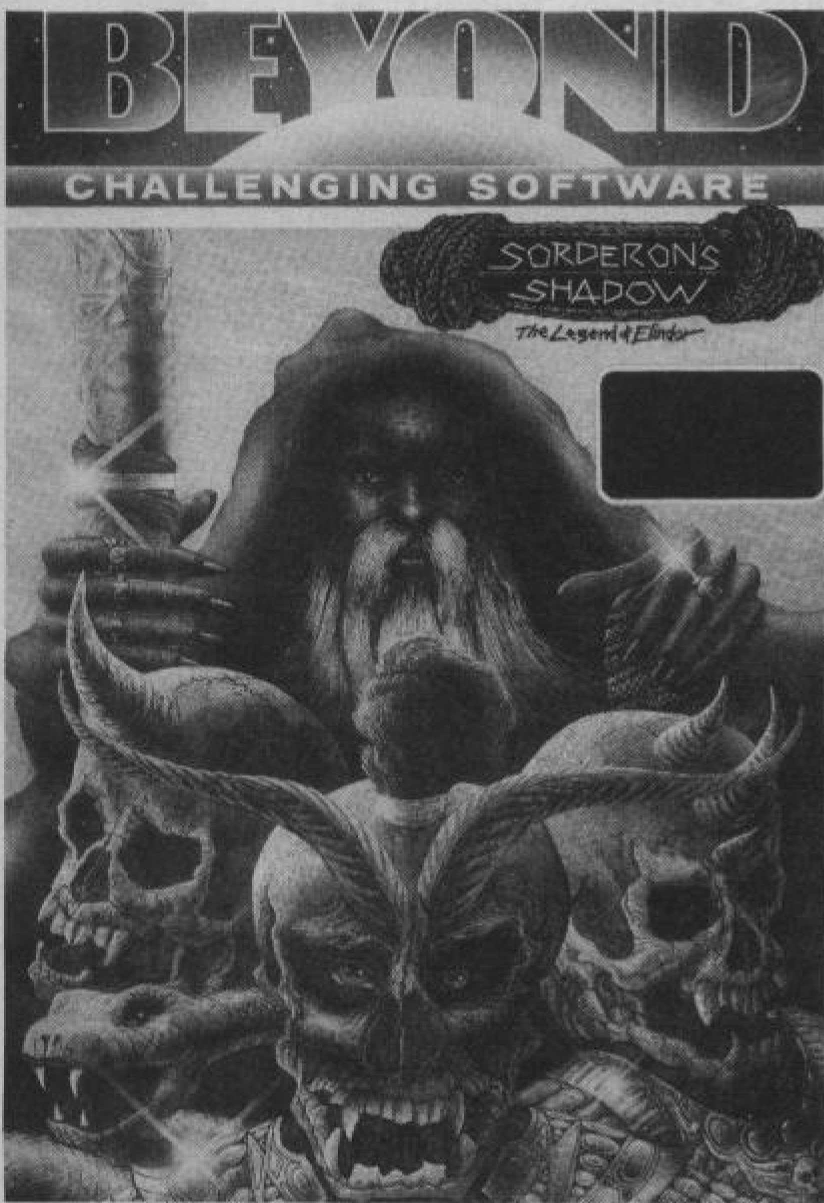
● *'The game has really striking graphics with some of the best action animation I've seen on a Spectrum — the only trouble is the gameplay is pretty dull. Once you've chopped up a couple of opponents and you realise that there are still another pile of foes which have to be similarly chopped, boredom tends to set in. The game would have been far better if it'd had some additional gameplay elements but as it stands it just gets rather tedious having to tackle the many (varied to look at) opponents in the same way time after time. Perhaps a set of different weapons would have been better, but as it stands it's just a case of 'nice graphics shame about the game'.*

● 'I must admit to not being that amazed by Melbourne House's *Fighting Warrior*. The graphics and animation are excellent but the game's just too simple to provide any long term interest. There is some frustration appeal, which makes you want to see what's on the next screen, but overall, despite the outstanding graphics, I wasn't very impressed.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q — jump, A — duck, P — move forward, O — back off and bottom row — fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair and cursor type
Keyboard play: very good
Use of colour: good
Graphics: superlative definition and animation
Sound: weak
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling
General rating: graphically excellent, but a bit short on gameplay variety

Use of computer	87%
Graphics	90%
Playability	74%
Getting started	87%
Addictive qualities	69%
Value for money	75%
Overall	**73%**



I suppose the biggest release this month to just miss being reviewed fully is the new graphical adventure from **Beyond** called *Sorderon's Shadow — the Legend of Elindor*. Rumour has it that the working name 'Elindor' was changed to avoid confusion with *Elidon* by **Orpheus**. Written by **Nick Eatock** and **Simon Welland**, *Sorderon's Shadow* has instant similarities to the Midnight Trilogy by Mike Singleton, who is reported to have been in Beyond's offices when the two lads brought the game in first time and was mightily impressed with what he saw. The similarities lie in the 'landscaping' technique that really allows you to feel a part of the world in which the game operates.

Elindor, like so many, is a land with a bad problem in the shape of an upstart wizard called Sorderon who is blighting everything. The far-seeing Karavor has chosen you (the un-named one) to win through nine tasks that should lead to the defeat of the evil Sorderon. Seven of these tasks must be undertaken in sequence, while two can be done at any time during the game. You have been called back in time (rather like Thomas Covenant) to help Elindor, a land not unlike Midnight with its forests, mountains, castles and cities. Unlike Midnight, *Sorderon's Sword* is also a text adventure, so the screen is split up into several bands, a text window for scroll messages, an editor and error message strip as well as the graphic display area where the 3D landscape appears. You are also told what characters exist in your location (designs by Denton Designs).

Sorderon's Shadow is out now priced £9.95, and will be going off to Derek Brewster the second I'm finished with it, so you should get a full review next month in December's issue.

Imagine (1984) Limited also just missed being reviewed properly with their new release *World Series Basketball*. The game may be played by one player against the computer or by two players simultaneously, each controlling their own team. A game consists of two 3-minute halves, started by the sight of the team members running onto the marked pitch. The graphics are of the line-drawn type, with the two teams distinguished by being in 'white' strip or 'black'. There have been several versions of Basketball on the CBM64 boasting a varying degree of graphic quality. *World Series Basketball*'s graphics are well animated, but I found the game a bit confusing to play, especially when there are two or more players on top of each other. However, this is a fault I would level at those versions on the 64 as well, and similarly, the very game itself is not such a visually exciting one. A personal point of view, because otherwise this looks like being a pretty successful program. Various time rules are operated to speed up the game, and the game time halts whenever play stops for things like throw-ins, so time isn't actually wasted. *World Series Basketball* is available now from Imagine at £7.95 — review next month.

Basketball is all the rage at the moment, for **Elite** are busy converting the popular **Commodore** version, *International Basketball* to the Spectrum. At least they should be busy — the game was originally scheduled to appear at the end of July, and quickly followed by a conversion of *International Soccer*. I wonder what's happened to that?

Sticking with sport for a few moments longer, **Audiogenic** — a software house not too much seen on the Spectrum — have just released a conversion of their 64 game *Graham Gooch's Test Cricket*. Before mentioning anything about the game, i ought to point out that Audiogenic obviously haven't done anything for the Spectrum for quite a while, because (beware), loading is done with LOAD "" CODE — a whiff of the





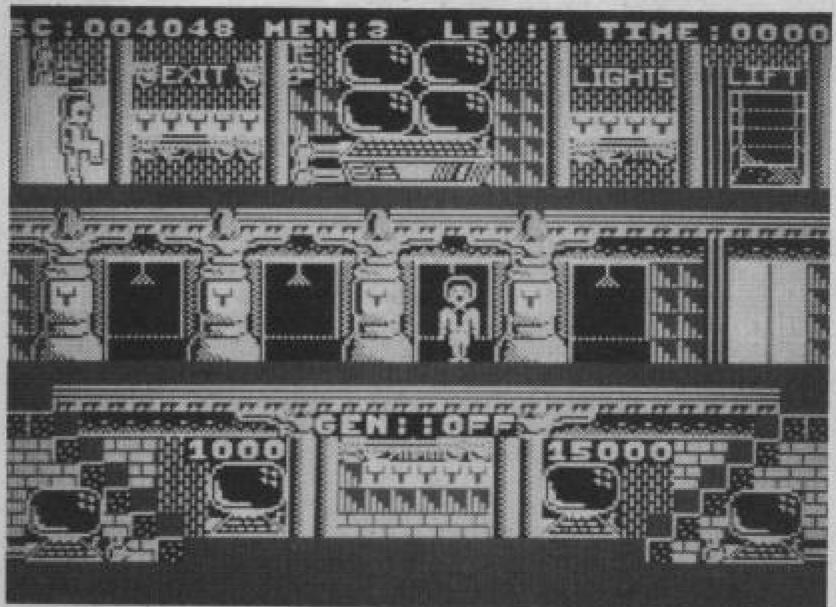
good old days. It's a pity that for the packaging, Audiogenic have opted for the old trick of using a Commodore screen shot (although it is stated as such), because it is misleading. The 64 graphics are better looking. That said, this is a far cry from any previous Spectrum cricket games. The format allows for an 'over the bowler's shoulder' view of the pitch, cutting to either side of the field when a batsman hits a longer shot. This means that for each ball, you can see the bowler, receiving batsman, wicket keeper and slip. The animation of the large figures is very good and quite convincing.

One player against the computer or two players simultaneously may compete in a one day match (one innings per team, limited overs) or in a full test match (two innings, unlimited overs).

There is also the strategy element of choosing the players for your team (selectable from famous names if you wish). You must take care not to tire out a particular bowler if you want good results. The keyboard can be used to alter the delivery of the ball and the aggression and stroke the batsman plays. If you enjoy cricket, then *Graham Gooch's Test Cricket* is graphically the most exciting game yet. Unfortunately I'm a bad critic because if I find basketball a bit drear, I absolutely loathe cricket! *(gasp!)* But don't let me put you off on that score *(groan)*.

And not quite getting away from sport entirely for just a weensy sec longer, how about Rothmans Football Quiz, published by **Cassell**? There are 1000 questions on the game for between 1 and 4 players with three different types of quiz, following the more popular TV quiz game formats — questions may be assigned to a player one at a time, or thrown at them three in a row, with a bonus for getting all three correct, and a bonus to the other players who can break in if a question is passed over; and finally a race to the buzzer type game. The questions range from British to International football and include important and trivial questions. The quiz has been edited by sports journalist and

editor of *Rothmans Football yearbook*, Peter Dunk and costs £8.95.



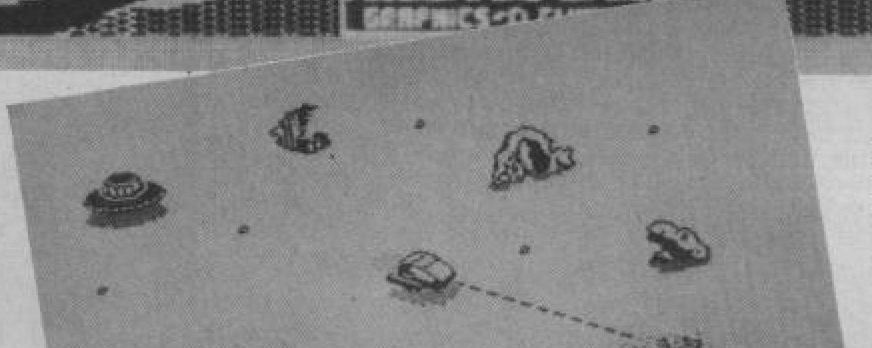
Keep an eye open soon for the game that 'puts you in two minds about paranoia', *Schizofrenia* from **Quicksilva**, a platform and puzzle game about Alphonse T. Nurd, a man whose alter ego has escaped and decided it likes being separated. The object is to reunite the two halves of Alphonse by solving your way through several lively screens of conundrums (look it up) while the roguish Alphonse T. II tries to undo your good work. Alphonse is actually the cleaner of Bogdon Schtunk's laboratory (come up and see what's on the slab). Bogdon, not to put too fine a point on it, is quite mad. But he's going to be even angrier if Alphonse can't get his duet act together and get back to work. £7.99 any day.

Durell are back in business with what they call 'a sophisticated shoot em up' called *Critical Mass* which employs 'advanced memory-mapping and sprite techniques'. What you're up against is a bunch of nasty old aliens who have overtaken an asteroid in the centre of a planetary system and are planning to self destruct the power plant, which will result in a massive explosion, causing a black hole and the loss of the system. Dire stuff, eh? You, of course, have been picked to fly in a strike craft at extremely low level to avoid enemy missile fire (if not the asteroid's rock outcrops), and infiltrate the enemy before the power plant reaches critical mass. It's a pretty sophisticated craft as well, equipped with the usual mod cons and a forcefield to protect you against impact with the rocks or missiles — for a while anyway. The power plant itself is protected by enemy scout vehicles, forcefields and counter-attack vehicles. Should your craft implode during any of these desperate manoeuvres, you are ejected just before the catastrophe, and must jetpack your way back along the route to collect another strike craft for another attempt.

Critical Mass has exciting looking 3D graphics, and you can fly in any direction over the cratered surface of the asteroid avoiding various types of alien craft, missiles and mines. More when we get it for review, but it should be available soon, price £8.95.

With compilations being the most popular grab em at Christmas game, **Creative Sparks** have leaped out with their own *Sparklers Special*. This consists of four older Creative Sparks games that totted up to almost 28 quid's worth over a year ago, and which you can now get for only £7.50. All of them have been reviewed at one time or another in past issues of CRASH. There's *Orc Attack*, *Stagecoach*, *River Rescue* and *Tower of Evil*. I rather enjoyed *River Rescue*, and it contained a bug that let you get quite nice high scores in no time. The idea is to rescue scientists from one river bank and deposit them on safely the other bank. You control a high speed launch on a river infested with islets, crocodiles and enemy aircraft. *Orc Attack* was well received in CRASH, for its interesting graphics. A sort of 'Siege' game where you throw rocks, boiling oil and whatnot down on the top of marauding, enfillading orcs. *Stagecoach* got CRASHBACKED recently. *Tower of Evil is a sort of Atic Atac* in some respects, without the graphic quality however. All four were reasonable to very good games in their day, and so at the price represent good value if you haven't already got at least two of them.





KERRASH! N·E·W·S I·

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM SALES SOAR

"..and only short way into selling season . . . " says spokesperson

Sinclair's share of the British home computer market rose by nearly 20% during the four weeks ending 7th of September. While the QL has made major gains owing to the price cut, the Spectrum Plus now accounts for more than half the home computers sold in this country.

The survey was carried out by Audits of Great Britain — an independent market research company of repute — and Sinclair Research is understandably pleased with the outcome. ". . . as always, Sinclair holds the key to volume sales this Christmas" commented Alison Maguire, Marketing Manager for the company.

THE FAME IN SPAIN FALLS MAINLY ON THE NAME

A new Spectrum with 128K memory was launched in Barcelona at the end of September. The machine is the result of months of collaboration between **Sinclair Research** and **Investronica**, the Spanish firm which has the exclusive distribution rights to the Spectrum in Spain. Apparently, development work on the new machine was funded entirely by Sinclair's partner in the venture.

Rumours have surrounded the 128K Spectrum for some time, and the appearance of a 128K machine on Investronica's stand at a foreign computer show has not put paid to speculation. Full technical details of the Spanish machine have not been released by Sinclair or Investronica, leaving room for continued gossip on the form that such a machine will take when it appears in this country.

It seems that Sinclair is aiming for a low profile in the UK for the Spanish machine — the hardware is apparently not being made available for review. "We don't feel it's appropriate to talk about it in Britain", commented a spokesperson for Sinclair Research who would only intimate that a new Spectrum might be launched in the UK this Spring.

As we went to press, a company called **Zeta Services** was considering the possibility of importing modified versions of the Spanish Spectrum to gazump Sinclair's official UK launch. It appears, however, that apart from conversion costs, the possibility of having to pay extensive import duties on the machines as well as running the risk of copyright infringement — all for a very low margin — might make the whole proposition unviable.

BACK TO SKOOL

The sequel to *Skooldaze* is finally here. Indeed, it arrived in the office about five minutes ago! In *Back to Skool* you have the opportunity to get up to even more mischief in the new school term — and you can even visit your new girlfriend, Haley, who's at the girls' school opposite yours. (*What if you're not a chap, eh? —ED.*) Since the game arrived too late for review, and Lloyd had scampered back to his cottage for a couple of days off, here's a quick run down on what it's all about:

You have to get your (stolen) report back into the headmaster's safe. Unfortunately, the key to the safe is around the headmistress' neck! This leads to a variety of complicated, funny but necessary nasty deeds on your part, which include letting mice loose, stealing sherry, getting a frog to attack the headmistress, hassling the caretaker . . . basically, all the things that go on every day in all good schools! (*Don't you dare use the 'Approved School' joke here — ED.*)

There's even a bijou love-affaire-ette! As you may have guessed, every time you get caught doing something naughty, you are given lines. Collect ten thousand of those and you're expelled.

There's quite a bit more to this sequel than there was in *Skooldaze*, and the graphics have been considerably improved. Again, by the time you read this, the game should be in the shops

WORDPRO COMP ON CARDS

Oxford Computer Publishing (OCP) are well pleased by their new wordprocessor for the Spectrum, which goes by the name of *Word Manager*. From what we've heard so far, *Word Manager* outperforms *Tasword II* on ten fronts — sounds impressive, and all for £12.95.

A certain Mr Bruce Everiss is working for OCP on the promotion front, *Our Competition Minion Writes* amongst other things, and he has been in touch with a proposal for a competition. Sounds great, we say — especially when we hear the first prizes are to be **Wafadrives** (reviewed in the Niche, this issue). Ten runners up will also receive a set of OCP's complete works on the Spectrum, which represents around £130 of software.

Full details of the competition and a detailed review of *Word Manager* should appear next issue.



HOPPING MAD?

Virgin Games have acquired the Rabbit Software name and intend to use the label to sell mid-priced titles on the a range of machines, including the Spectrum. This prompted the Virgin team to dress up in bunny suits, dash off to the local park and hug a tree while trying to look cute and endearing.

Nick Alexander, Big Bunny on the Virgin team (in the black cossie), sees the label supplying good, unusual software at a price people will be willing to pay: £3.99. The first of these games, *The Great Fire of London* is reviewed in this issue's Frontline.

CLONE'S THE WORD

. . . As regular readers of my ramblings will know, I like Hewson's launches. Not only the food and drink, either. They actually have new products to show — not just the promise of, 'one day soon . . .'

When I spoke to Steve Turner at the last but one of these, (*a rambling or a launch? —ED.*) he let on that his next 'adventure movie' would take the techniques seen in *Dragontorc* into space. What he failed to mention was that *Astroclone* would see the return of the Seiddabs, those backwards baddies from Hewson's history, who were never restrained in coming forward — and blasting you.

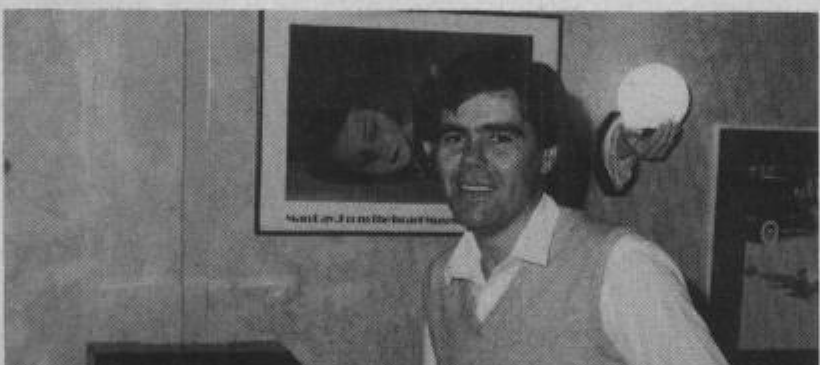
Nor did he reveal that the game would have three distinct parts. Closest to *Dragontorc* is the ground combat phase, where you move your warrior around enemy bases, but with more complex commands and animation than in the Maroc games. Then there's a *Defender* style, space shoot 'em up and an overall strategic phase when you deploy your forces to best effect.

Nine months of hard work later and once again, out rolls that good ol' Hewson hospitality as Steve proves that old maxim; you're never alone with a clone. And by the look of Astroclone, you'll never be lost for things to do — it's more packed than the bar was.

Eventually, as the party dispersed, I cornered the talented Mr Turner and asked, 'What next?' The answer could be a wargame, as he's become increasingly interested in the strategy aspects of gaming. Whatever it does have, I bet there won't be a single grid reference in sight . . .



● Steve Turner and alien friend discuss ASTROCLONE



● Not to be left out from a good in-house launch, SOUTHERN BELLE programmer Mike Male took a break from converting his train simulation for the C64 to show his face



● Andrew Braybrook throws down a joystick challing to JR and anyone else in the vicinity — it's amazing what you can get people to do for the camera!

THE END OF AN ERA? OR JUST A LITTLE CULT?

Automata have released details about the solution to one of the longest running and best known computer quizzes in the UK — *Pimania*. After many years of puzzling by dedicated Pimaniacs, the game has finally been solved — having been cited in a divorce case and caused mental anguish across the globe.

Winners of the now fabled Golden Sundial were Sue Cooper and Lizi Newman who finally made the crucial connections which led to the reward. For Pimaniacs everywhere, who nearly made it the answer lay in the fact that just as the constellation of Pegasus was near the 'Seven Sisters' of the Plough, so the correct 'White Horse' is near the 'Seven Sisters' chalk cliffs in Sussex. To open the Ultimate Gate of Pi, you stood in the Horse's Mouth (that being the 21st location), had the seven objects sacrificed beneath the Gate and entered the final key — 22. Pi (22 over seven) was a clue right from the word go! The sundial was found at noon on the 22nd of July.

The partners of Pimaniacs currently contemplating petitioning for divorce may find it cheaper to invest in a copy of the complete solution, available from Automate UK. But it's not over folks! The little cult is not yet dead, according to Christian Penfold of Automata, but is alive, kicking and releasing a *Ten Pack*.

N·E·W·S I·N·P·U·T··

ALPHABATIM IS BORN

Visitors to Crash Towers this month included Chris Urquart, Mike Smith and Mike Baxter, who together have formed **Alphabatim** a new software company. They came to show us how work was progressing on *Robot Messiah* their new game.

Having sorted out the preview which appears elsewhere this issue, they were treated to the now traditional CRASH hospitality — including several pints of Old Flatulence Bitter. They were so impressed by Ludlow's charms that they stopped the night and had their first board meeting the next day!



● Mike Smith and Chris Urquart of Alphabatim: what a cool pair of Liverpool dudes.

MELBOURNE MUSIC

With the launch of Melbourne House's eagerly awaited *Lord of the Rings* coming ever nearer, news has come in (to this poor minion's desk) about their other impending releases. *Big Daddy's Wrestling* is the latest game from the team responsible for *The Way of the Exploding Fist*. *Gyroscope* which has been worked on by various teams at Melbourne House, is a **weird** arcade game where you have to control a . . . guess what? The catch is, some of the terrain is very tricky indeed!.

Finally, there is the *Wham!* music program which our very own Maestro, John Bates has already had a peek at and seems quite impressed with. Full review next ish.

TRIP TO GRAX

In which John Minson is invited to see something interesting . . .

As I left **The Edge** after my sneak preview of *Fairlight*, author **Bo Jangeborg** made me an offer I couldn't refuse: Would I like to see **Grax** some time?

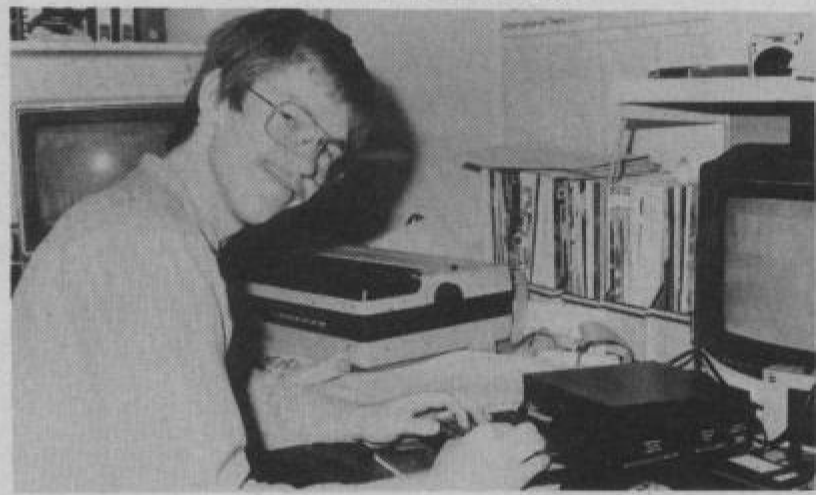
Now what, I hear you asking, is Grax? Some sort of obscure fish dish from Bo's native Sweden? A roaming monster from *Fairlight*'s dungeons? Neither — Grax is the programming utility at the heart of the Worldmaker technique which gives *Fairlight* its realistic solidity.

Those of you who've used *The Artist*, would feel at home with Grax. Using a variety of graphics techniques, such as advanced rubber banding, where a line can be moved and stretched from a point, and a total of 26 different fill patterns, it's comparatively simple to create an overhead perspective view of a room.

Once you have the layout in place you position pre-drawn features such as windows and doors where you want them. First comes the basic picture, which can be manipulated, reversed and generally fiddled around with. Then it's put into position in the picture — and the system allows floors to continue through openings.

Apart from being very simple to use, the system is very compact. Bo has found a way of reducing all these room details to a minimum of code. While Grax was originally developed to produce half screen illustrations for *Quill*ed adventures, it's now a fully-fledged graphics mini-language with developments in the pipeline which will take it much further. You should be able to include figures in pictures, for instance . . .

So why's this all so important? Bo's returning to Sweden and his own company, **Xcellent Software** but he's leaving Grax behind. It should form the basis for a series of diverse adventures from The Edge. Perhaps more importantly, it will eventually be possible to buy Grax as a utility — perhaps in a form for illustrating adventures to begin with, but one day you might be able to create your own *Fairlight* type adventure as easily as you can write a text adventure with *The Quill* today.



Bo Jangeborg gets his head down to some serious work with GRAX — the utility that helped make FAIRLIGHT possible

BEST EVER PCW SHOW

According to the organisers, this year's PCW show, held at Olympia in September, was an astounding success, despite the supposedly poor state of the market. Over 63,000 people visited the show over the five day period. Including people coming back into to the show, more than 70,000 people crossed the threshold, making it the largest computer show ever held in the UK.

● Date for your diary: Despite rumours to the contrary, next year's PCW Show will again be at Olympia, and will run from the 3rd to the 7th of September.

AN END TO THE WAITING

Digital Integration, the people who created the phenomenally successful *Fighter Pilot* have announced their latest creation — *Tomahawk* — is ready at last and will be previewed on Wednesday October 16th, which means it should be in the shops as you read this.

Tomahawk is based on similar principles to *Fighter Pilot* but this time, you're controlling a Hughes Apache attack helicopter, flying over advanced 3D graphic terrain.

DALEY THOMPSON'S SUPERTEST

Producer: Ocean
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Authors: **P Owens and J Smith**

Daley Thompson's Supertest is the long awaited follow-up to last year's big summer hit *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*. *DTS* and *DTD* (sound like weed killers) really originate from the Konami arcade classic *Track and Field* which started the olympic sports craze around Easter last year.

There are eight events in *DTS*: four on one side of the cassette and four on the other. When you load in a side, the aim is to go through the quartet of events as many times as possible. To complete an event you have to beat the set qualifying time or score. If you qualify then you progress to the next event; if you don't then you lose one of the three lives you start the game with. Each time you complete a cycle of four events the qualifying times get harder.

Control is very simple, using just two speed buttons and a fire button. The speed buttons have to be hit alternately as fast as possible — if you're using the joystick then swift left and right movements will do the trick. The fire button is used to do a number of things — fire a gun, jump and so on, depending on the event.

Initially, the qualifying targets are fairly low, but as you go round and round, things get progressively more difficult and the challenge mounts up. Once you've lost your three lives (or become a superhero) you can always flip the tape over and load in the other four events . . . but the score you achieve on one



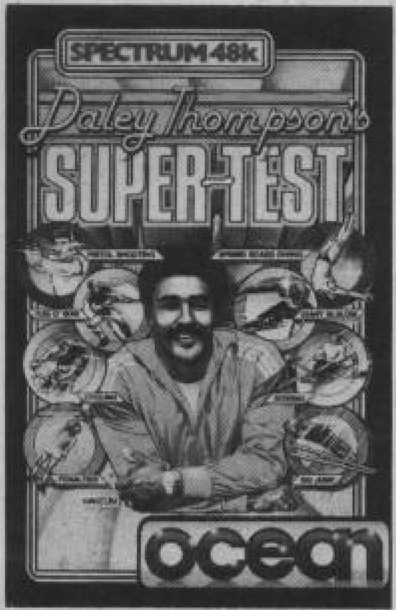
set of games cannot be carried over onto the other

THE EVENTS

Pistol Shooting
You stand in front of a set of six 'flip-round' targets. With ten shots in your pistol you shoot the targets as they spin round. You control a cursor, manoeuvring it over the target and shooting the bullet with the fire button. You cannot compensate if you move too far horizontally or vertically which can be annoying, and if you don't get a shot off while the target is facing you, you still lose a bullet. Points are scored for accuracy.

Cycling
This is one of those simple pound-the-keyboard-into-the-floor events. As soon as you hear the starting gun just hammer away at the keyboard (or joystick) to get the fastest possible time.

Springboard Diving
Bounce your man on the diving board three times by using the fire button to gain height and



then he'll automatically dive. Pound away at the keyboard to make your man do as many somersaults as possible. When he's near to the surface of the water stop somersaulting when his head is pointing down. If you get it right, he enters the water perfectly. A panel of four judges awards points for each dive . . .

Slalom
Here you have to build up velocity by pressing the speed buttons so you can zoom down the hill. Once you see the flag gates you gain control of the skier and you have to steer him between the flags. If you hit a flag or turn too sharply then you lose speed and missing a gate completely means disqualification.

Rowing
This is another simple event where you have to beat the qualifying time by pounding the speed buttons as fast as you can.

Penalties
Here you have to build up speed during the run-up to the ball using two keys, then you kick the ball at the goal by pressing the fire button at the appropriate moment. The way the ball travels depends on how fast you run up and how long you keep you finger on the fire button. The longer you keep your finger on the button the more the ball will bend. Too little and the 'keeper will save it, too much and you'll put the ball the wrong side of the post. You get five shots and must score three goals to qualify.

Ski Jump
Another event where you have to build up speed at the beginning. Whizz your way down the slope and when you reach the end press the fire button to jump. Watch him fly gracefully through the air and then press the fire button to land him safely.

Tug O' War
To complete this event you just have to build up massive energy with the speed buttons so you can out-pull your opponent.





CRITICISM

● **'The trouble with this game is that it's trying to break into the** Track and Field **market where** Hyper Sports **rules supreme.** DTS **is very similar to its predecessor and the essence is on hammering the keyboard as fast as you can. Here there is no skill involved and anyone with speedy digits can easily knock up huge scores. It's boring and predictable to play: two games on the market are incredibly similar. The graphics are nothing special and the sound is reasonable with a few jolly jingles and effects. The game isn't half as good as** Hyper Sports **and I wonder why Ocean haven't gone for a new type of control method . . . I'm just getting very bored of pounding my fingers into a Spectrum keyboard.'**

● *'Only eight events this time.* Supertest *doesn't really test much other than your persistence at pounding two keys or waggling the joystick from side to side. No strategy, no tactics, just lots of stick waggling or key pounding and a little bit of timing. I suppose it's ultimately competitive, but the fun wore very thin for me very quickly. A respectable piece of programming with jolly tunes, passable graphics and eight different ways to pound two keys. . . . If you like this sort of thing you love it, if you don't, you'll loathe it.'*

● 'I suppose the extremely unreliable loader bumps up Supertest's event count by one. I'd say it was the only test with any kind of lasting appeal. The graphics and sound are quite good though very predictable, with Ocean employing all the little tricks they've learned from *Hypersports*. The events themselves aren't anything new either; all of them making appearances in various other joystick destroying games. If Ocean really intend to squeeze every last drop of money out of Daley Thompson's name then I think it's about time they broke the mould and did something different rather than trying to recapture past glory through mediocre products such as this.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor and Interface 2
Keyboard play: reasonable
Use of colour: fair, plenty of attribute problems
Graphics: varied, but mostly big, undetailed and not very well animated
Sound: nice jingles and spot effects
Skill levels: increases as you progress
Screens: eight events
General rating: very disappointing; nothing special

Use of computer:	86%
Graphics	81%
Playability	72%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	77%
Value for money	79%
Overall	**76%**



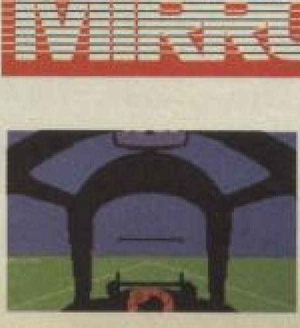
THE BEST THING SINCE THE REAL THING

A Spitfire flight simulation set in 1940. Ground features and realistic air combat.

Target: To rise through the ranks of the RAF elite to Group Captain, VC, DSO, DFC

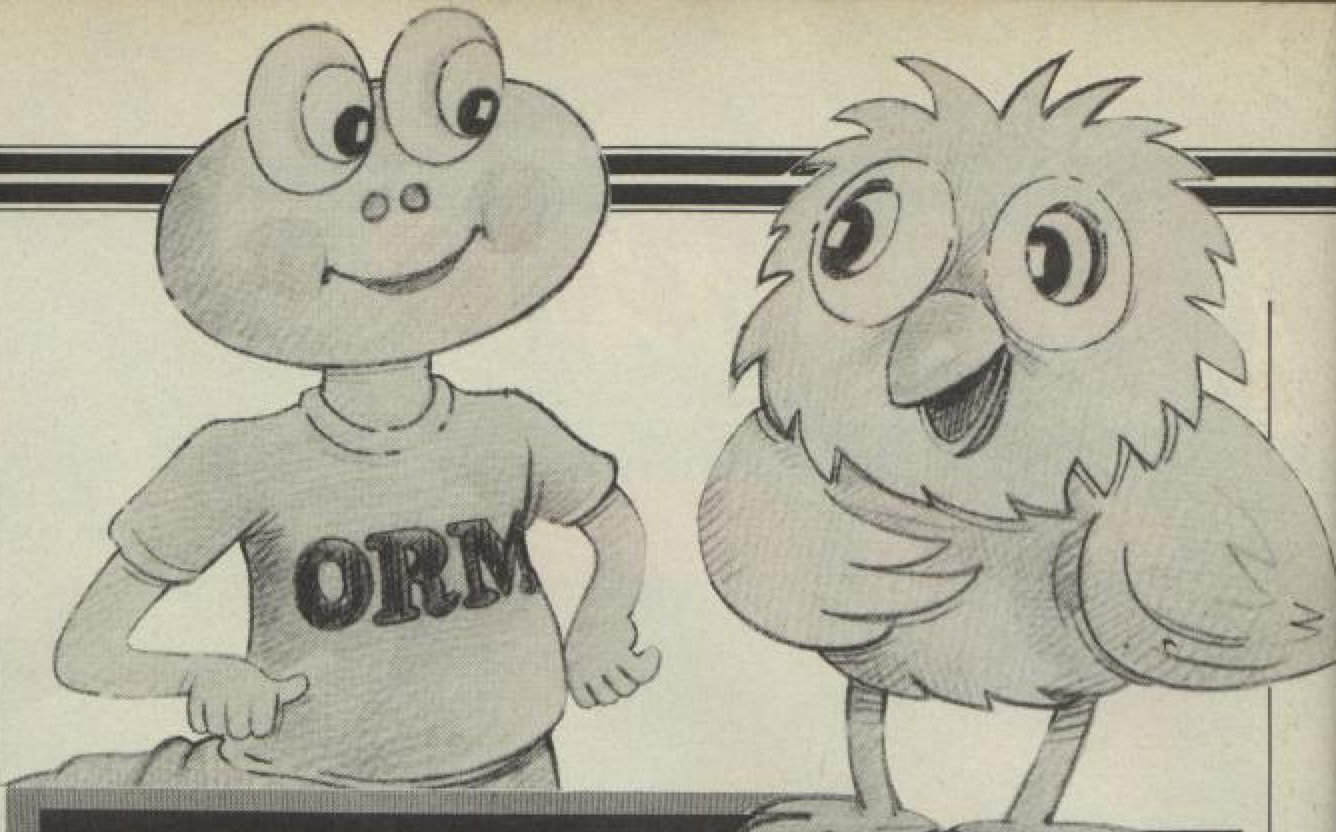
MIRRORSOFT

Spitfire '40 is available from W H Smith, Boots, and good software stores everywhere.





Mail order and catalogue requests to:
Mirrorsoft Ltd., Maxwell House, 74 Worship Street, London EC2A 2EN
Tel: 01-377 4644
Trade orders to:
Mirrorsoft Ltd., Purnell Book Centre, Paulton, Bristol BS18 5LQ.



ORM AND CHEEP IN Narrow Squeaks and The Birthday Party

Producer: MacMillan Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95 each**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Widgit Software**

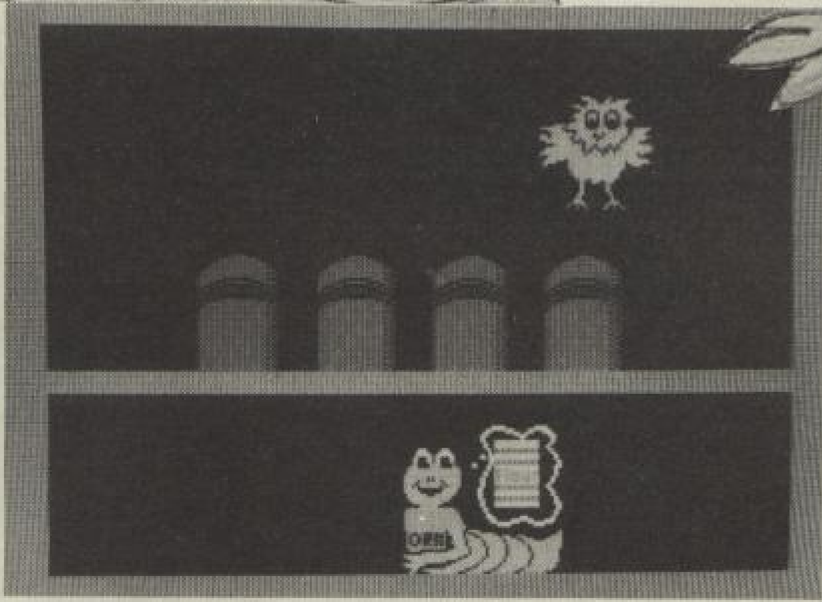
I must confess that I'd never heard of Orm and Cheep before these programs landed on my desk. The publicity handouts, however, informed me that Orm (a worm) and Cheep (a yellow bird of some sort) are well-loved cartoon characters from a TV programme 'watched by 72% of the 4—15 viewing audience'. Both games are marketed as being suitable for 'kids of all ages' — a very misleading statement. I know it can be very difficult to categorise games into neat age ranges, but what on earth are 'kids of all ages'? The handout, in fact, claims that 'whether you are 6, 16 or 60 you'll find Orm and Cheep a lot of fun'. Not being any of these ages myself (no, I'm not telling you how old I am!) I invited some kids ranging from 5 to 14 years of age, to look at the programs with me.

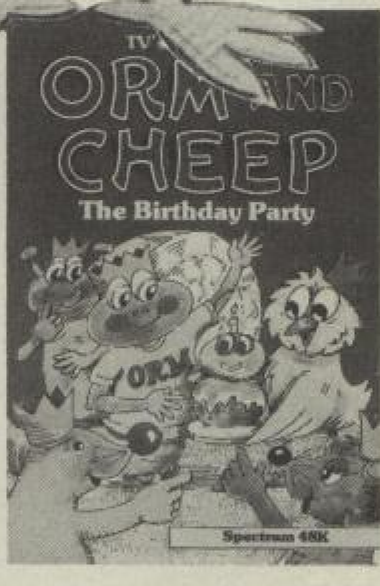
Both *Narrow Squeaks* and *The Birthday Party* begin with a reaction tester to set the level of play. The words 'Orm and Cheep' drop, one by one, towards a horizontal line and the player has to press a key to stop them as near to the line as possible. Having thus set the starting level, the difficulty of the game adjusts according to the player's skill. *Narrow Squeaks* contains four games, and I'm afraid we found them all totally boring and pointless. The instructions are extremely difficult to find for a start (they are hidden away in the text describing the game) and the children certainly had a lot of difficulty working out what to do as the explanations, once you have found them, are far from adequate. The objective in each game turns out to be surprisingly simple and totally uninspiring.

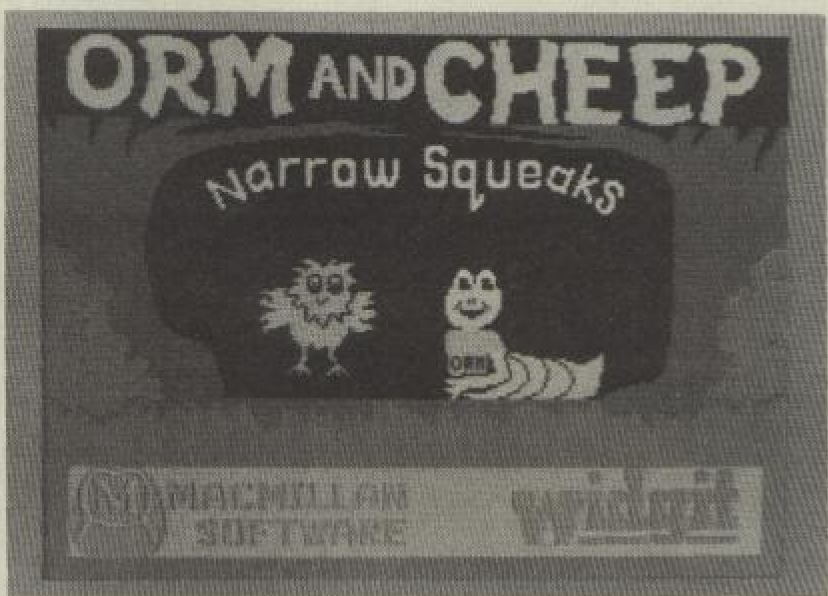
The Birthday Party is described as 'a compelling graphic adventure' but it can hardly be said to fit into the adventure game genre — and we definitely didn't find it 'compelling'. The idea is to move Cheep around the countryside to find animals invited to Orm's birthday party, and accompany them safely to the party having outwitted the enemy on the way. We found the noise of Cheep flapping his wings particularly irritating as the game progressed — and there is no facility for turning off the sound!

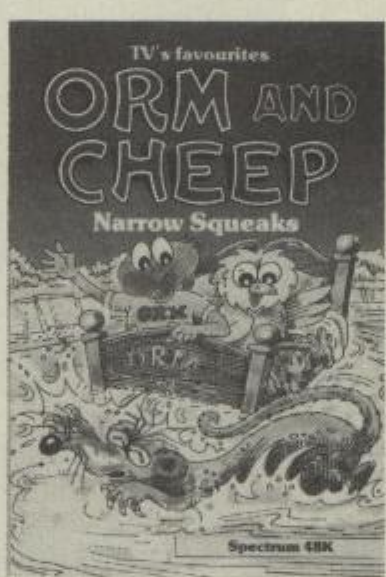
The graphics in both programs are quite nice, but I'm afraid that's the only positive thing I can say. These Orm and Cheep games got a definite thumbs down from all the testers, with the five year old saying they were the worst programs he'd seen. One parent, in fact, told me that if he'd bought the games for his children, he'd have returned them to the shop and tried to get his money back! 'Absolutely awful' just about sums them up!

Rosetta McLeod









COMMENTS

Control keys: any key, which keeps the game simple for the very young child
Joystick: not applicable
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: bright and attractive
Graphics: appealing
Sound: maddening, and impossible to switch off
Skill levels: adjusted automatically
General rating: both games are totally awful

Use of computer	60%
Graphics	70%
Playability	40%
Getting started	35%
Addictive qualities	20%
Value for money	25%
Overall	**42%**


SABOTEUR!
DURELL
software getting harder
SPECTRUM
&
AMSTRAD
R.R.P. £8.95
DURELL sales dept.,
Castle Lodge, Castle Green, Taunton TA1 4AB

A CRASH Smash

F•A•I•R•L•I•G•H•T

FAIR-LIGHT

Producer: The Edge
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Bo Jangeborg**

The Land of Fairlight was once a happy, jolly place — but this is no longer the case. More than three thousand years have passed since the worthy King Avars held court over the land from his Castle, and the whole country is enveloped in gloom and despondency. The Light has gone from the land, and the days are perpetually grey and gloomy when once the sun shone endlessly in clear blue skies. Over the years, partly as a result of a series of weak rulers, the social fabric of Fairlight declined — the people once lived happily in a peaceful land, full of music, jollity and magic. Now the country has a feudal system; society is fragmented, overseen by merchants and barons.

Castle Avars stands alone in the middle of the plain of Avarslund, impenetrable and surrounded in rumour and myth. Folktales suggest that a perpetual summer shines within the castle; other myths tell of Segar the Immortal who dwells within the castle, awaiting the moment to return, when he'll bring Light back to the land.

Isvar is the reluctant hero of this game, which forms the first part of the *Chronicles of the Land of Fairlight* and is subtitled *A Prelude: The Light Revealed.* Musing one day on the state of life he decides to enter Ogri's Wood — a wood that is universally acclaimed as dangerous. Ignoring the wisdom of the Elders, (Isvar is sure they must be hiding something — perhaps a great treasure) he enters the wood and is captured by the woman-monster Ogri and carried off to her cave, unconscious.

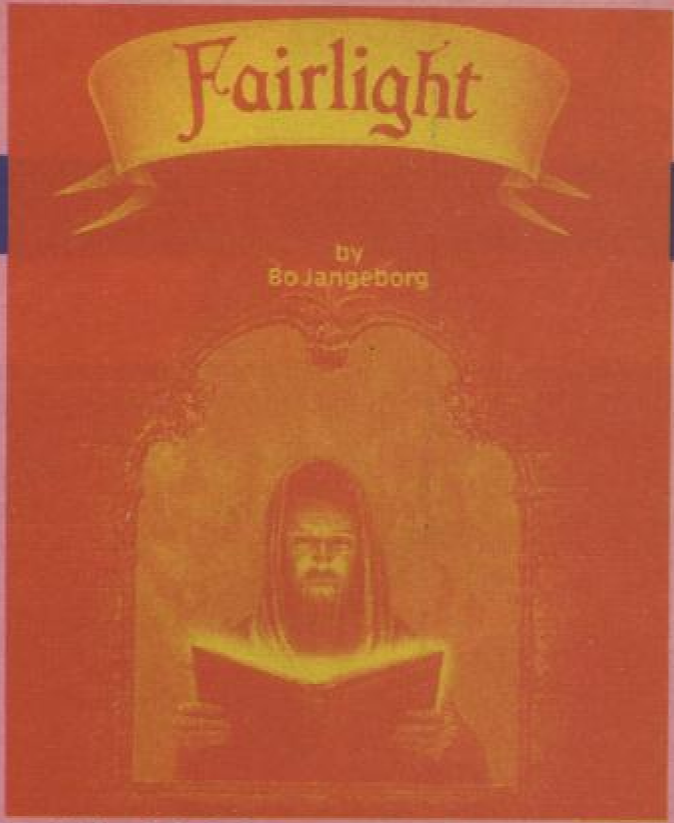
When Isvar comes round, Ogri has departed. The figure of a old man in a hooded cloak appears before him and tells Isvar that he is now on the shelf of Ogri's larder! Not one for being eaten, Isvar follows the old man out of the cave towards Castle Avars. Suddenly an entrance opens up in a wall that moments before was featureless. Isvar is in the castle and the old man explains that he is the court sorcerer of King Avars and has been imprisoned for thousands of years. Then the old man disappears — the figure which lured Isvar into the castle was merely an apparition, created by the imprisoned sorcerer for just that purpose. Isvar is now trapped in the castle, and can only escape by finding the Book of Light hidden within its walls and taking it to the sorcerer.

Isvar, the character you control, is moved round in a world which is not only three-dimensional in aspect, but realistic in terms of the way objects behave. Isvar has five pockets in which he can store objects he collects — but each object has a mass and obeys the laws of physics. Push a chair and it will move quite a long way; push a table and it moves less far. You can pick up and carry several pieces of food, for instance, as each is quite light but if you try to carry a barrel you will find that it is so heavy that Isvar has to drop everything else first. Objects may be called from a specified pocket, when they will be displayed on the little scroll next to the life counter, and can then be used. This scroll also acts as the display area, where messages to do with the manipulation of objects — such as 'too heavy' — appear. Isvar's life force is also shown.

Isvar begins with a life force of 99 units, shown on a counter on the scroll. This counter is decremented by encounters with the trolls, guards and other nasties that patrol the castle and may be topped up by eating food or drinking wine that can be found here and there. Isvar can fight and kill some of the nasties, using his sword, but other opponents are not in the least perturbed by his efforts and are best avoided completely.

Each location in the castle is colour coded — which helps you keep your bearings while you explore. All the open air locations, for instance, are blue. As you leave one room or location, the screen will go blank for a couple of seconds while the change is made, then the new location flashes onto the screen, ready drawn. If a location is filled with other moving figures, Isvar slows down a bit — but in an empty room he can really motor! During gameplay, silence reigns, but music fans





will really appreciate the two channel simulation at the start which pushes the Spectrum's Beeper to the limit!

CRITICISM

● 'Bo Jangeborg has certainly come up with an excellent new system for creating 3D representations of rooms and the objects contained in them. Playing Fairlight **is a little tricky at first, owing to the number of keys that you have to master but once the initial awkwardness is overcome it's great fun shoving things around the place and piling objects on top of one another to make ramps which Isvar can climb. Very soon you do feel as if you are playing in a real world and although the pauses between rooms are a bit annoying, the links are made very well. Overall an excellent game, with first rate graphics — worth getting hold of to play not just to look at.'**

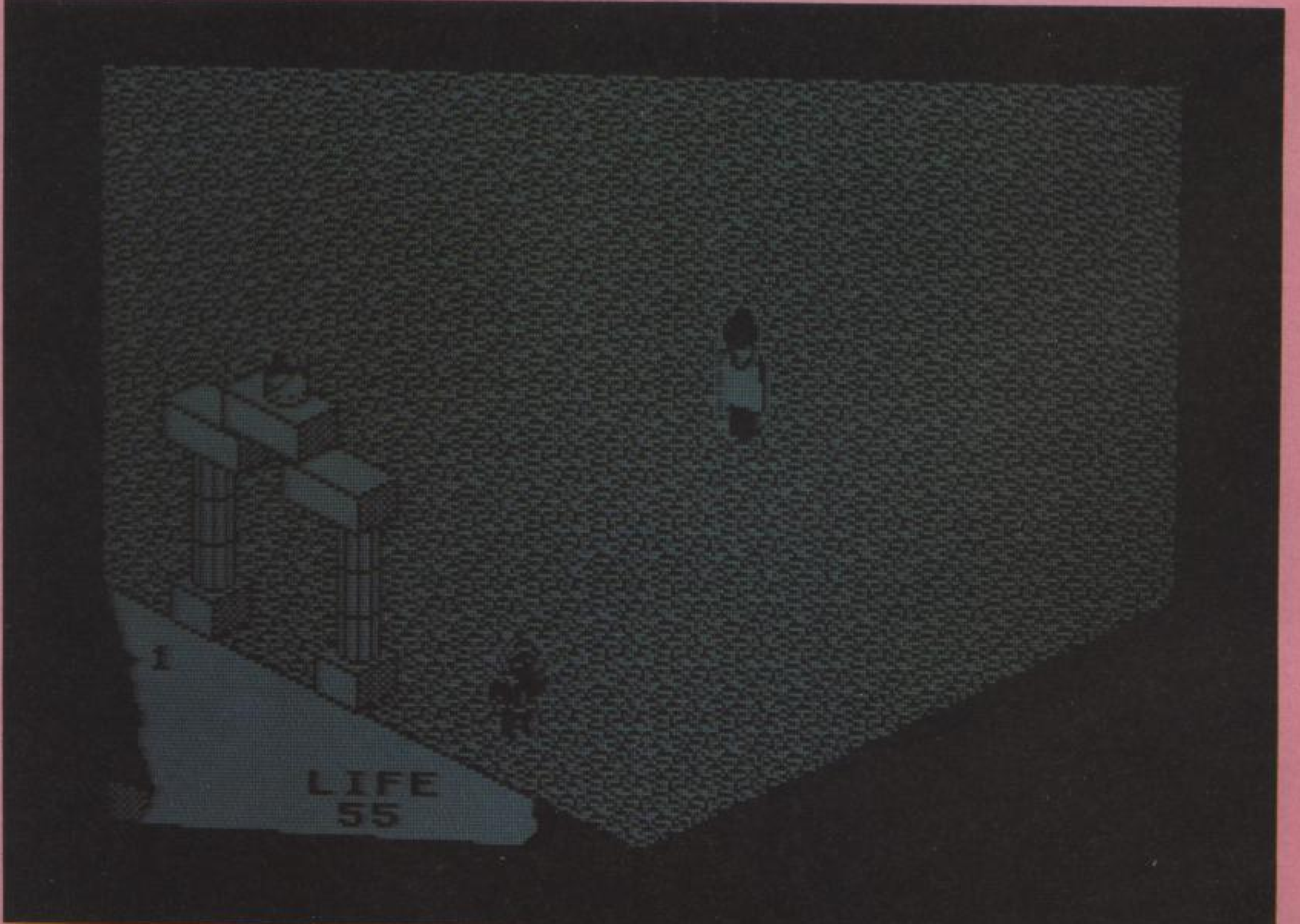
●*'Wow, amazing, brill, trif, fab, awesome and other such noises . . . I've never seen a game that looks as good as this. What excellent graphics! This knocks Filmation and Filmation 2 into a cocked hat. And there's a game behind the graphics too — what more could I ask for? Sound. There isn't any during the game, but the intro music makes up for it. Control is awkward and takes a little getting used to, but once you get the hang of it, playing becomes second nature. The only thing that is a little infuriating is that the screen blacks out every time you change location. I strongly recommend this game to everyone: it's very playable and addictive and it looks so good.'*

●'Ultimate first introduced us to realistic 3D graphics but sadly not a lot of game was bolted on to them. Now, thanks to The Edge, that gap has been filled. *Fairlight* features very high quality graphics and a good tune at the start of the game. While the game is fun to play the desire to see the other screens makes you want to solve puzzles to get nearer the end effect. Controlling Isvar and manipulating objects is very easy and using a bit of brain power it's not long before you are well and truly hooked. It's hard to say whether *Fairlight* will appeal to arcade fanatics but I'm sure there are few people who could actually say the game is useless! The Edge have come up with a very good arcade adventure with 3D graphics that should rate in everybody's top 10.'

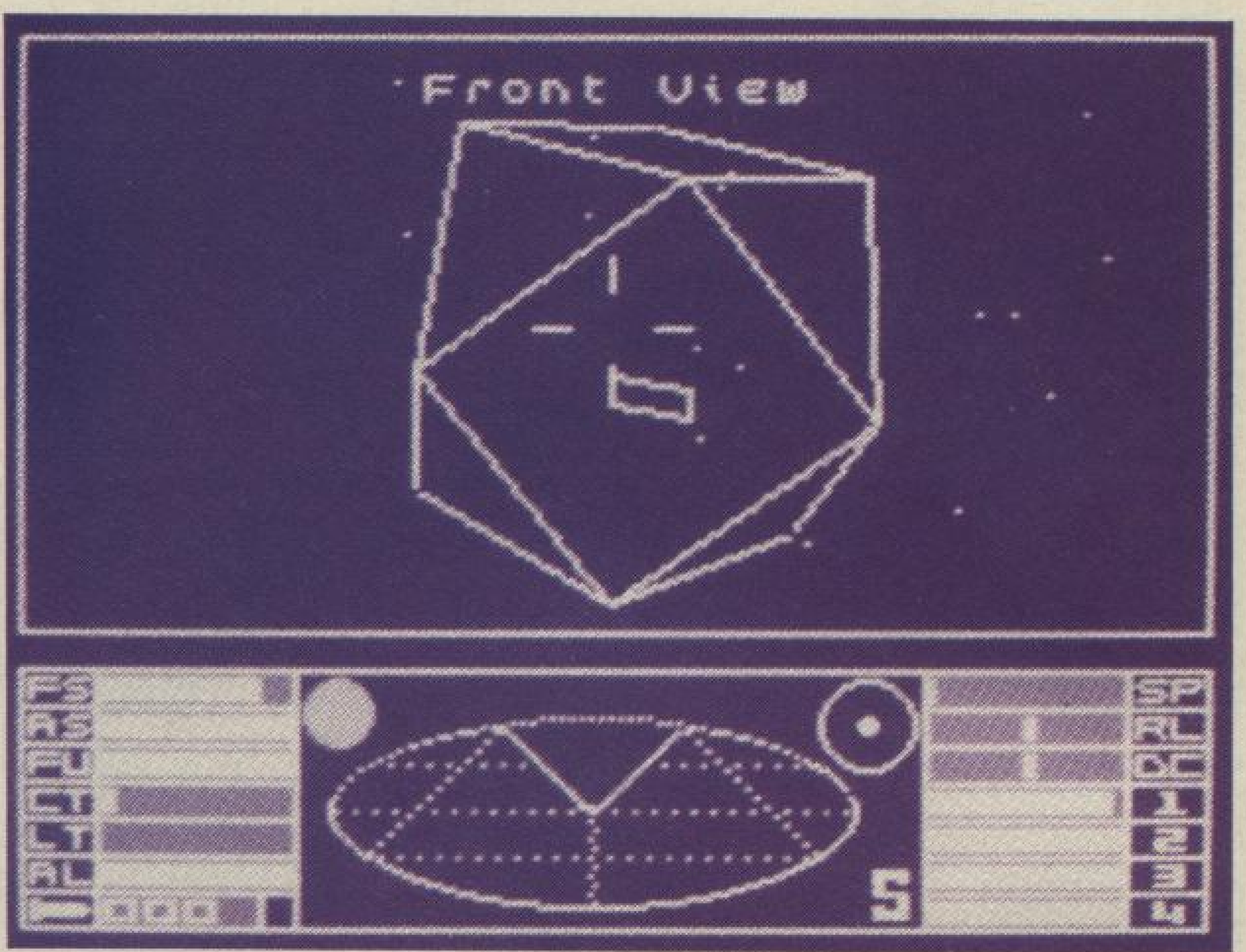
COMMENTS

Control keys: Y-P up and right; H-ENTER down and left; Q-T up and left; A-G down and right; SYMBOL SHIFT/SPACE jump; B-M fight; X-V pick up; CAPS/Z drop; 1-5 select objects; 6/7 use object selected
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive, but easier on rubber ones!
Use of colour: only black and a second colour used in each location
Graphics: a stunning new technique for 3D representation
Sound: cunningly simulated two-channel music to begin with, otherwise silence
Skill levels: one
Screens: 80
General rating: a stunning game, achieved with a new programming technique

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	97%
Playability	90%
Getting started	86%
Addictive qualities	91%
Value for money	92%
Overall	**95%**



E•L•I•T•E



ELITE

Producer: Firebird
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£14.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Torus**

Starting life on the BBC, *Elite* was converted for the Commodore and, has just appeared for the Spectrum, a mere three months late. It will go down in history as the first major piece of software to be supplied with the *Lenslock* protection device — a cunning way of preventing piracy by supplying a plastic decoding lens which is used to discover the encrypted access code for the game. In essence, after loading you need to look through the lens onto the screen in order to see the code letters which must be input before the program will RUN. The cassette is also accompanied by a slim novella which sets the scene.

Converted by Torus, creators of *Gyron*, Spectrum *Elite* follows a very similar format to its other incarnations. With stars in your eyes and a Cobra Mk III in your charge, you've set yourself the task of becoming Elite, a combateer of the highest ranking. To become Elite you'll have to rise through several distinct stages starting with the almost derogatory rating of 'Harmless'. The more ships you kill, the higher your rating will rise, though mindless violence is not the only aspect to the game.

To become an efficient killer you must have a well equipped ship, replete with weapons of destruction. When you start, the ship you're given is a pretty poor machine, not really up to the rigours of deep space combat, so the best thing to do is to buy extra equipment from the space stations you'll find in orbit around every planet. Most of the military hardware doesn't come cheap and seeing as how you only start with one hundred credits you will need to make some money. This is where the mindwork comes into play. You will have to trade.

Every planet in the eight galaxies has a tech rating and some information detailing the world's economy. Using a trader's cunning, you can buy goods at one planet and take them to another and sell them for a profit. To be sure of making a profit it is wise to sell goods naturally rare on the planet you're trading with. For example a tech level 12, highly industrialised planet will probably have to import food, making the market price quite high. If you buy food from a low tech agricultural planet you can ferry it to the more advanced planet for a good profit margin.

Information about each planet's political state is available, which will range from corporate state to anarchy. It is not wise to travel to an anarchic system with little in the way of weaponry as the place will be crawling with pirates. And pirates are doubly aware of you if you're carrying any cargo.

Different cultures aren't too friendly with each — you can't land on planets. This makes trade awkward, so it's effected through a system of space stations. Each trading planet is orbited by a Coriolis space station which you need to dock with — a time consuming and awkward task. Once docked, you can refuel your ship and barter your wares inside the hanger. If you get rich, it's possible to buy a docking computer to make life easier.

Fuel is only expended when you use hyperwarp for interstellar travel. Pottering around in planetary space burns no fuel and trips can be costed in fuel terms on a the short range chart. If you've bought some fuel scoops you can pick up free fuel by flying close and raking energy from the a star's corona — sun skimming.

Bounty hunting is lucrative and simple: jump into an anarchic system and blast away at everything. A kill point is awarded for each ship destroyed and your credit status grows with the bounty. It is, however, best to go in heavily armed, and with a fair amount battle experience. Other loot gathering activities include asteroid mining, slave trading and drug running — but the last two are illegal and harm your legal status.

You see the action from the cockpit, viewing a 3D representation of space. Three other views are available through left, right and rear windows. The display is mainly monochrome; vector graphics represent ships and objects. Colour appears occasionally, in explosions.

To keep track of ships and asteroids not in your immediate vicinity, there's an oval short range chart. Other ships, attacking and friendly, are represented as a bar with small hook at the end showing the height above or below your ship and distance from it.

A wealth of informative documentation comes with the cassette. A book commissioned from SF writer Robert Holdstock gives an interesting story plus a multitude of veiled hints for survival in a rough galaxy. The Space Traders' Flight Training Manual is also included, an essential guide to survival giving hints on docking, trade and combat. You also receive a pretty wallchart to hang in your cabin!

If you are doing well it's possible to save out your progress to tape. This will record all your status attributes including score and credits.

CRITICISM

● **'*Elite* is one of the most imaginative games ever to be designed to run on a home computer and Spectrum owners should be pretty chuffed that they've got a superb version. When a ship's destroyed, the explosion looks like an expanding ball of gas and vaporised metal. It's highly effective. There are slightly fewer ships than on previous versions but the graphics move quite fast considering their complexity — they're flicker free, too! All in all an excellent version of an excellent game.'**

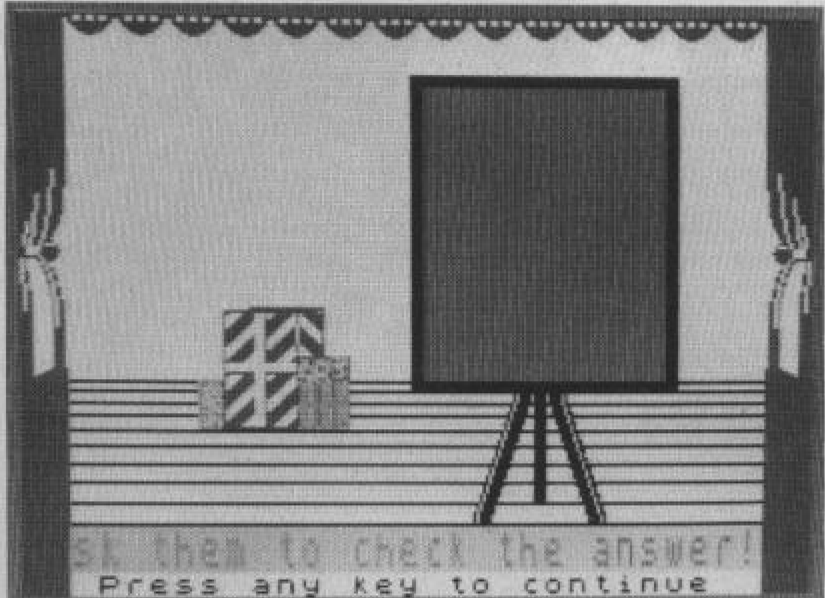
● *'With the Spectrum* Elite, *Firebird have improved on a tried and tested formula. It must have been quite a risk to take, adapting a cult game from the BBC and putting it on the Spectrum, but the risk has paid off handsomely. The graphics are excellent of a reasonable speed (not as fast as* Starion*), and, unlike previous versions of* Elite, *they are not flickery. So much for* Elite *the Spectrum version, what about* Elite *the game? It can be slow to get into, because at the outset you must trade to get on, but once you have achieved a level of skill that allows you better equipment for your ship, the game really hits deep space in a mean, mean way. This is a perfect blend of trading, shoot em up and strategy and if you're not very careful you can find yourself getting badly hooked, spending hours trying to get just*

MAGIC

Producer: Macmillan Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£8.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Peter Eldin**

Macmillan have been publishing educational software for some time now, but their latest series, while still being educational in nature, is aimed at a different market. They have decided to combine their book publishing talents with software publishing and have turned out a series of packages under a sub label *The Professional Touch*. Three packages have been produced so far, one of which is magic, or conjuring if you prefer.

The idea behind the *Magic* package is to provide the user with information and stimulation to encourage the study and enjoyment of conjuring. The book, some 34 pages thick, is liberally filled with instructions detailing the performance of some fourteen tricks, varying from the simple 'crying coin' trick to effective 'eggs from nowhere'. Each trick is introduced and then presented in the form of step by step instructions with simple drawings to aid your understanding. At the end of each section there is a little box containing the Magician's tip. Generally the tips are designed to help you present the trick to an audience.



Performing tricks is not really a pastime that you can enjoy on your own — the fun only begins when you can confound your friends, pets and family. If you are going to put on any sort of a show you must be able to 'dress up' your tricks so that there are no awkward moments while you remove the matchbox or card which you secreted away earlier. The book places great emphasis on this point and quite a lot of attention is paid to the presentation of the tricks, not only in the Magician's tips boxes but there's also a separate section at the end that gives a little advice on practice, patter and preparation.

Only one page of the book is actually devoted to the software. After the program has loaded you will be asked if you want to make a Microdrive copy: an all-too-rare feature. There follows a little business of entering a code word, initially set to MAGIC, the idea being to prevent any of your potential audience taking a sneak look into you computerised box of tricks, always assuming that any of your victims could actually set a Spectrum up.

Once you are finally underway you will be asked to select between TRICKS, SEQUENCE and SHOW. The Tricks section demonstrates the inner secrets of nine tricks but does not deal with the type of magic found in the book. Some of the tricks could be better described as puzzles, and are very well known indeed. One of the tricks titled 'Now you see it now you don't' is not a vanishing act as the its title suggests, but more a display of optical illusions. You probably know the sort of thing where a picture of a young girl can, with a bit of imagination and screwing up of the eyes, also be seen as an old hag.

The Magic section is subdivided into three parts. The first part explains in words the principle behind the trick or illusion. Secondly, a tips section explains how the trick is performed and how you should put it across to an audience. The graphics associated with the trick are presented on screen while a scrolling message underneath 'talks' you through the performance. The final section allows you to perform a trick any number of times, allowing you to get your speil off pat, and patter off your speil.

Once you have worked your way through the various tricks, and learnt the principles on which they are based, your understanding should enable you to present them to an audience with the panache and confidence of a true performer. The Sequence section of the game allows you to select which of the nine 'acts' you want in your show and you can choose the order they are presented in. Should you want, you can add some musical embellishment to your show. When you have decided on the content of your performance and are sure that you can present each act competently, then you are ready to begin.

The show begins with the stage curtains closed; press a key and the title of the first act will appear accompanied by some music. When the curtains open you will see the same stage set-up that you learned to love so much during rehearsals. However, this time you must present each trick to the audience without any help. Although the computer will perform the actual magic, you are the presenter. If you suddenly find yourself well endowed with over ripe fruit you can assume that you should return to the earlier stages in the game and polish up your performance. Either that or get a new act.

CRITICISM

My lasting impression of this package is that the book, thin though it is, is a great deal more valuable than the software. Having said that I can appreciate that the reverse is true in the case of a younger child, younger than say 10 years old. The book is so well presented it's interesting from beginning to end. The same cannot be said for the software: for one thing the tricks are tedious, and for another two of them will not work under certain circumstances. The 'Total Bemusement' trick causes just that, if the difference of a number and the reverse of that same number is equal to 99. Likewise when, for the 'Number Divination' trick, you enter the remainder of a number being divided by another, as zero then the trick fails.

The graphics for each of the tricks are only hovering around the reasonable standard mark, the same can be said for the overall presentation of the program. But if you have an inclining towards wizardry then this package could be a fair introduction. The book is certainly a good introduction.

E•L•I•T•E

that little bit further. Here the SAVE game facility is a great help, and means that Elite is not so much a game — more a way of life. That may sound corny, but for once it really is true! No self-respecting Spectrum owner should be without it because it's worth every penny of the £15 price tag.'

● 'Well here it is at last, the Spectrum version of *Elite*, and yes it has been worth the wait. The graphics are very good, only slowing down a little, if at all, when the screen gets chock a block. The launch/hyperspace sequence is very neat, nearly as good as *Dark Star*. The screen layout is well-balanced with just the right amount of colour and dots. The addictive nature of the game is increased with 5 missions compared to the meagre 2 of the C64 and BBC versions. My only gripe is that you have to use some stupid lenslock thing to play the game — you could spend hours trying to suss out the thing. You can compare you version of *Elite* versions for other machines and smile with pride at what Firebird have produced.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Front View/Launch (1); Back View/Buy (2); Left View/Sell (3); Right View/Equip (4); Escape Pod (Q); Energy Bomb (W); ECM (E); Find Planet (R); Fire Missile (F); Target (T); Unarm (U); Galactic Chart (I); Local Chart (O); Data on System (P); Fire Laser (A); Dive/Cursor Up (S); Climb/Cursor Down (X); Anti-clockwise Roll/Cursor Left (N); Clockwise Roll/Cursor Right (M); Distance (D); Hyperspace/Intergalactic Jump (H); Torus Jump Drive (J); Prices (K); Status (L); Inventory (ENTER); Freeze (SHIFT); Docking Computer (C); Home Cursor (B); Save/Decelerate (SYMBOL SHIFT); Continue/Accelerate (BREAK) Keyboard overlay provided
Joystick: compatible with all joysticks
Keyboard play: complicated!
Use of colour: sparse but highly effective
Graphics: excellent, but occasionally produces odd effects
Sound: nice tune when loaded, plus some spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: not applicable
General rating: a first class absorbing, game

Use of computer:	
Graphics	93%
Playability	91%
Getting started	92%
Addictive qualities	94%
Value for money	81%
Overall	92%

Are You Taking Your Spectrum Seriously?



Your Sinclair Spectrum is a powerful computer, not just a games console. Oxford Computer Publishing unleash that power to make your Spectrum useful and help you perform important tasks. The Manager series of business programs has thousands of satisfied customers over the last three years. Your Spectrum can do jobs normally associated with business computers many times the price. The Utilities were written to create our own application software. They are offered to you as proven reliable programs that have stood the test of our own usage and become industry standards. The classical games are realistic simulations of proven widely played "real" games.

See your local dealer or order direct by indicating the items required, by ticking boxes, complete the coupon and return the advertisement. Alternatively, phone the OCP Hotline on (0753) 888866, stating your Access or Barclaycard Number.

BUSINESS PROGRAMS

ADDRESS MANAGER

A professional address, filing and retrieval system, with full screen editing. Stores up to 350 addresses on cassette and up to 6000 addresses on floppy disk. (In separate files) 32 column format – £8.95 ☐ 80 column format – £19.95 ☐ **NEW** K-DOS tape/disk cassette – £29.95 ☐ SP-DOS floppy disk – £29.95 ☐

FINANCE MANAGER

Stores and reviews practically all business and domestic accounts. Completely menu driven for ease of use. Stores up to 250 names on cassette and up to 6000 on floppy disk. (In separate files) 32 column format – £8.95 ☐ 80 column format – £19.95 ☐ **NEW** K-DOS tape/disk cassette – £29.95 ☐ SP-DOS floppy disk – £29.95 ☐

STOCK MANAGER

Features full invoicing, sales totals, price lists and re-order requirements and comprehensive Master File with full breakdown of stock and VAT. Stores up to 600 product lines on cassette and up to 6000 on floppy disk. 80 column format – £19.95 ☐ **NEW** K-DOS tape/disk cassette – £29.95 ☐ SP-DOS floppy disk – £29.95 ☐

VAT MANAGER

Will check gross and nett values of a period's sales plus exempt totals and up to 8 classes of transaction e.g. standard rate, import/export etc. Calculates VAT paid and received and hence the nett tax payable/receivable.
32 column format – £8.95 ☐ 80 column format – £19.95 ☐ **NEW** K-DOS tape/disk cassette – £29.95 ☐ SP-DOS floppy disk – £29.95 ☐

WORD MANAGER

NEW

This word processor has been designed for "user friendliness". The following features should particularly appeal to users of the "Tasword II" program, with which it is text compatible. The software includes an address filing supplement with screen editing. Extra features include:

- ★ **Simple "single keystroke" insertion facility.**
- ★ **The cursor can be moved on to start a new paragraph by a single keystroke. TAB key also available.**
- ★ **The program works with cassette tape, Sinclair Microdrive, Opus and other disk systems.**
- ★ **Texts can be printed out on any line length up to 128 characters.**
- ★ **Text blocks of any length can be transposed, copied or deleted.**
- ★ **The OCP program can print out text while another is being written or edited.**

The Word Manager – £12.95 ☐
Disk Versions – £19.95 ☐

UTILITIES

MASTER TOOL KIT

This versatile program gives you a re-number feature, string – search, a real time clock, a graphics generator and alarm plus many other features that'll change your Spectrum into a 'full spec. machine'.
Master Tool Kit – £9.95 ☐

FULL SCREEN EDITOR/ASSEMBLER

An essential tool for writing Machine Code whether you're a beginner or an expert. Includes full screen input, comprehensive documentation, sophisticated expression evaluator, SNAKE demonstration mode, extra micro drive facility etc. It also drives 32 and 80 column printer interfaces from the same cassette.
Full Screen Editor/Assembler – £12.95 ☐ **NEW** K-DOS tape/disk cassette – £29.95 ☐ SP-DOS floppy disk – £29.95 ☐

MACHINE CODE TEST TOOL

Test and Display Machine Code instructions as they're written. This versatile program can co-reside in your Spectrum with the Full Screen Editor/Assembler to provide a complete Machine Code environment. Features Hex: Decimal conversion routine, character generator, etc. etc.
Machine Code Test Tool – £9.95 ☐

GAMES

CHESS-THE-TURK

The ultimate chess challenge. 6 levels of play, 'Blitz' chess, printer output, plus real time clock and alarm. Chess-the-Turk – £5.95 ☐

CASINO ROYAL

Two way program featuring Roulette and Pontoon. You're allocated money to win – or lose – a fortune. Plug in Microspeech adds realism and both games are fully explained through a comprehensive on-screen menu.
Casino Royal–£5.95 ☐

VIDEO POOL

All the fun and challenge of pool at your fingertips. 1 or 2 people play using joysticks or keyboard. Excellent graphics, sound and colour add to the game's reality.
Video Pool–£5.95 (**Not** Microdrive compatible) ☐

Please send your order to:
Oxford Computer Publishing Limited
77a Packhorse Road
Gerrards Cross Buck. SL9 8PQ

Access BARCLAYCARD VISA

OCP

Simply The Best

If you would like a copy of our full colour detailed catalogue – please tick box. ☐

Name ____________

Address ____________

____

Amount payable £ ____________

Please make cheques/postal orders payable to OCP Ltd

Cheque/PO Number ____________

Access/Barclaycard number (please delete) ____________

Signature ____________

TEAR OUT

Wafadrive, Opus and other media versions of our programs will be available in the near future. Contact us for further information on 0753 888866. C/11/85



TEN PACK

Producer: Automata UK
Memory: 48K
Retail price: £8.00 (mail order only)
Language: BASIC, machinɔ code and Quill
Author: various

From Automata U.K. Ltd. comes *Ten Pack Vol. II*, a compilation tape containing the ten best games sent to Automata since *Ten Pack I*. The ten titles include a mixture of programs, among them utilities, adventures and arcade games. Our in-house **Piert, Gary Liddon loaded them up and took a look.**

Pi There.

Playing Rastapiman you have to rescue Christian Penfold (the ally pally wally) who has been locked in a cage on screen twenty. The game format is similar to that of arcade favourite, *I, Robot*. Trapped in a maze, Rastapiman has to turn all the red blocks to purple by running over them. There are gaps in some parts of the maze and he'll have to jump them. Jumping is dodgy because of the continual surveillance of the 'Eye of Pi'. The eye can destroy you if it sees you jumping a gap, though you can avoid its stare by waiting until the eyelid closes, when it's safe to jump. The eye's anger can also be invoked if you stay too long on one maze: its intolerance to your presence increases as the timer ticks down. Also in your way are the Eye Scream Men, whose touch is fatal. Despite the title of the first sheet, 'Easy, ain't it?', it isn't and will take some practice to clear even the starting screen.

Xtroth

This is a nice little graphic adventure putting paid the 'rule' that no one programs games in BASIC any more. Hak T'anger is a psychopath trying to kill you, Jaze Kilroy, to stop you from saving the intergalactic ark full of rare animals. The pictures appear on a window taking up the top half of the screen and second window, containing text, is directly underneath the graphics. Your input is displayed on the bottom line. The graphics take some while to appear, being individually drawn, and are a bite sparse when they do arrive. The problems presented are of a quite high standard, though the slowness of the game detracts from its addictive qualities. Really not a bad adventure, just awkwardly presented.

Pi in the Sky

Travelling in a big pink balloon with a big Pi scrawled on it you have to keep aloft while avoiding the gas sapping clouds. There are ten countries to travel through each 500 miles in length. If your gas supply becomes too low then help is at hand — grab a tin of baked beans you'll find drifting by. The baked beans boost you gas supply, though I can't see how. The ground scrolls smoothly along the bottom while jelly fish like clouds wander the skies.

Though not the most stunningly executed game on the tape, *Pi in the Sky* is definitely one of the best to play. The clouds do sometimes get a bit too wobbly but if you ignore that you're left with quite a nice little game.

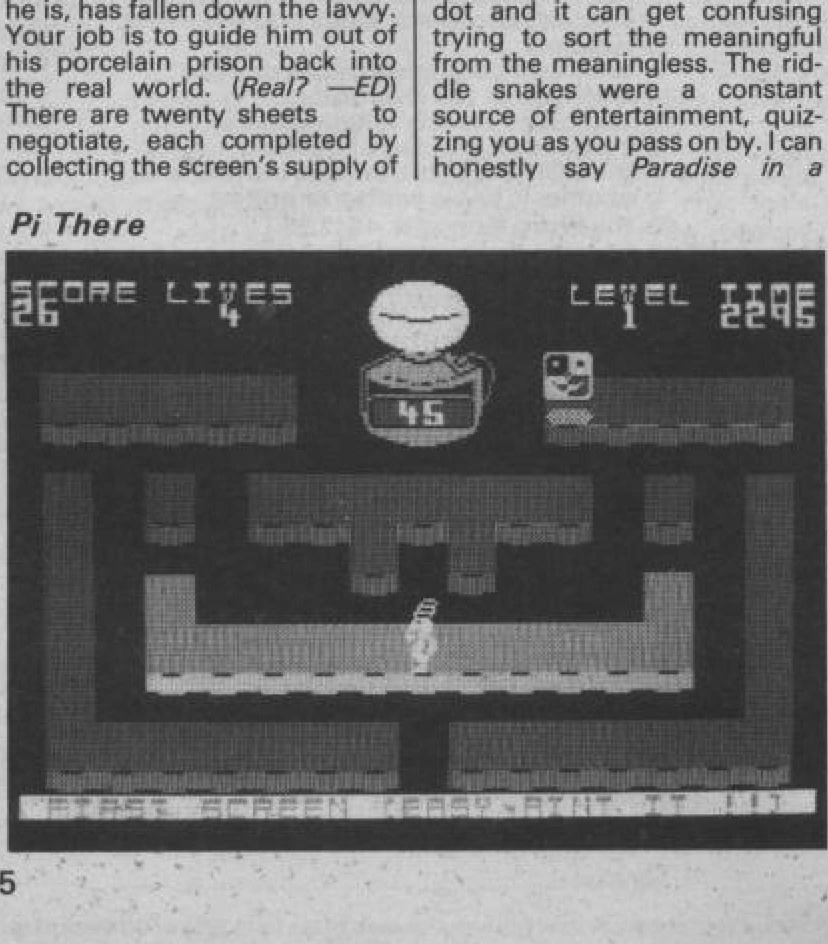
Toilet Trubble

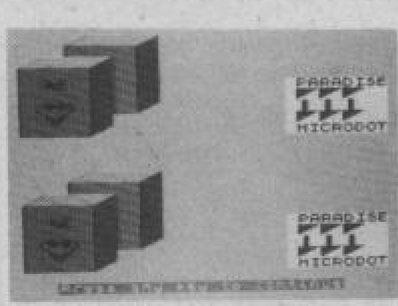
Zak the snail, careless soul that he is, has fallen down the lavvy. Your job is to guide him out of his porcelain prison back into the real world. (*Real? —ED*) There are twenty sheets to negotiate, each completed by collecting the screen's supply of toilet rolls. Everything else on screen is deadly to snails and must be avoided at all costs. Zak can move in the four basic directions up, down, left and right but he can't stand still. The screen titles run true to normal Automata wit, the first being named 'You Can't Beat the Cistern'. The game's a bit flickery with character movement. After a while it can get a bit tedious.

Paradise in a Microdot

The Quill and *Illustrator* have been used to excellent effect in this entertaining adventure. Trapped in a microdot you have to solve various puzzles to pass the seven defences to reach the secret object. To accompany you on your journey is the disembodied head of Professor Norden, a scientist rendered headless by the secret police. There are various jokes and riddles scattered about the microdot and it can get confusing trying to sort the meaningful from the meaningless. The riddle snakes were a constant source of entertainment, quizzing you as you pass on by. I can honestly say *Paradise in a Microdot* never bored me; the program was always able to come up with new rebukes. This is the best adventure on the tape and very good it is too.

Pi There





Paradise in a Microdot

The Egg

This simple arcade game casts the player as a hovering egg trying to collect twenty True Blue Hatching Pills. The background is very similar to that of New Generation's age old *3D Monster Maze*, with a 3D maze background. There are various objects blocking your way, some deadly some just impassable. When the twenty hatching pills are in your possession then a gateway opens into the next screen. All in all pretty average stuff but it can provide a few thrills for arcade junkies.

Chambers of Death

Every compilation has a stinker, at least one game that doesn't quite fit in because of it's the worst on the tape. Well I'm afraid that *Chambers of Death* is it. Clement has disappeared in London's sewer system and ever since, the place has been overrun with a horde of nasties. You have to find the main n flood gates so you can get them open so all corruption can be washed away and the sewers once more made a safe place.

Chambers of Death is an Arcade adventure with a lot of screens all looking extremely similar indeed. Usually with this type of game you'll be able to remember various routes after a few goes, but at the start of this game the maze is randomly generated. Your man can move character squares only and is pretty unresponsive to your keypresses. Various baddies do cross your path but they're easily vanquished. All in all really not worth bothering about.

Nudgeit

As fruit machine simulations go Nudgeit is one of the most proficient to date. Taking a very similar format to Frogit, a real fruit machine, the features included are close to those on the real thing. You are given two pounds and fifteen minutes to make your fortune. The screen is attractively presented in blue, mostly, using yellow as a highlight. The reel graphics are very good with a real fruity look to them. Nudges are awarded









FIGHTING WARRIOR

"Use all your powers of combat in this thrilling Egyptian Arcade game. Featuring sensational scrolling graphics, large animated sprites and ferocious fighting action."

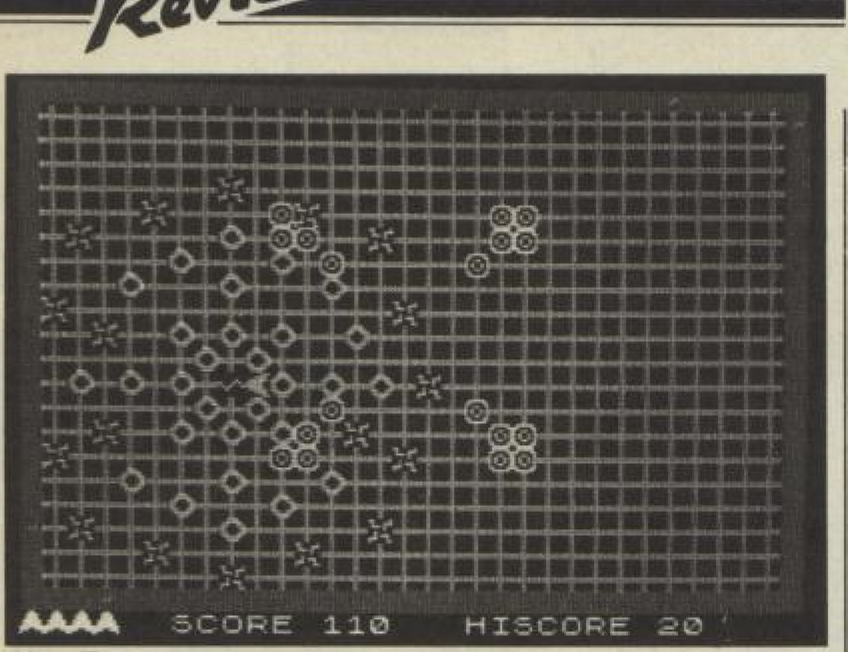
Available for Spectrum at £7.95 and Commodore 64 at £8.95. Coming soon for the Amstrad.

Screen shot details from Spectrum version.

from **MELBOURNE HOUSE**

Melbourne House (Publishers) Ltd., Castle Yard House, Castle Yard, Richmond, TW10 6TF.
Trade enquiries call 01·940 6064

Available from selected branches of Boots, WHSMITH, John Menzies, WOOLWORTH, LASKYS, Rumbelows, Greens, Spectrum Shops, and all good software dealers



Nth Zone

allowing you to try and better your winnings. Holds are also implemented. The only thing lacking is cash, though continual practice with this handy piece of software should improve your chances of making money in the arcades.

Nth Zone

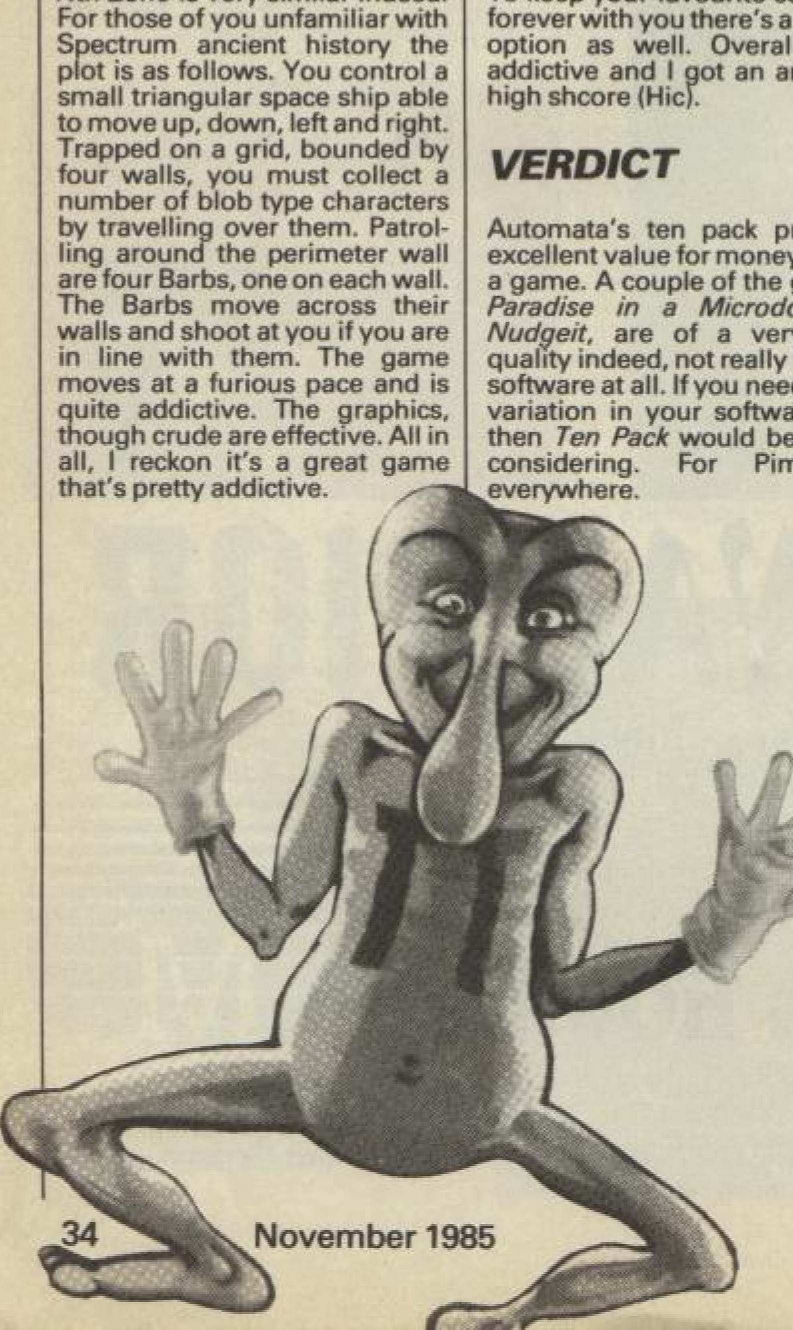
Anyone out there remember *Transversion* from Ocean? Well *Nth Zone* is very similar indeed. For those of you unfamiliar with Spectrum ancient history the plot is as follows. You control a small triangular space ship able to move up, down, left and right. Trapped on a grid, bounded by four walls, you must collect a number of blob type characters by travelling over them. Patrolling around the perimeter wall are four Barbs, one on each wall. The Barbs move across their walls and shoot at you if you are in line with them. The game moves at a furious pace and is quite addictive. The graphics, though crude are effective. All in all, I reckon it's a great game that's pretty addictive.

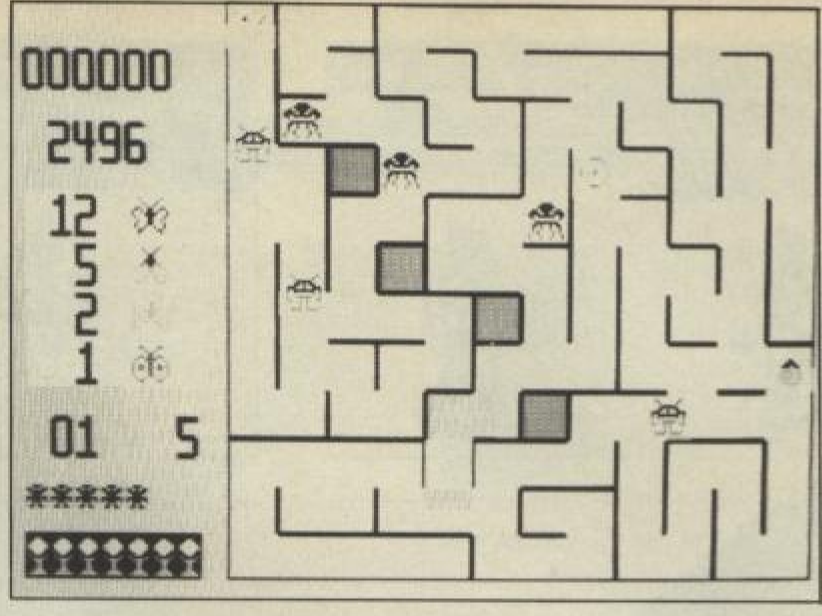
Piman's Cocktail Cabinet

Depending on your age, Piman's Cocktail Cabinet could prove to be very handy. Containing a database of 160 different cocktails the program allows you to either list the ingredients of a particular cocktail or type in the ingredients you've got. If you type in what your drink cabinet contains then the Pi Man will list all the cocktails available to you. Automata's knowledge of drinks is second to none. Other software houses are merely beginners, barely out of their heads. To keep your favourite cocktails forever with you there's a printer option as well. Overall, very addictive and I got an amazing high shcore (Hic).

VERDICT

Automata's ten pack presents excellent value for money at 80p a game. A couple of the games, *Paradise in a Microdot* and *Nudgeit*, are of a very high quality indeed, not really budget software at all. If you need some variation in your software diet then *Ten Pack* would be worth considering. For Pimaniacs everywhere.





MAZE CRAZE

Producer: Partyline
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **IDL**

Maze Craze is a **sort** of *Pacman* game. You know ol' Pacman, the yellow fellow who trundles around a maze eating millions upon millions of little dots and power pills. He gets followed by ghosts who are out for his blood, you know the one. If you don't then where the hell have you been for the last three years?

Maze Craze is very similar — as you go along you leave a yellow trail and you have to fill the maze up by going everywhere you can (a sort of reverse *Pacman* if you like). Just to make life more difficult you've got to pick up a certain number of moths which are dropped around the screen. You scamper around the maze against a clock — a digital display reduces your pile of points according to the distance you move. If you manage to collect the number of moths displayed on the left of the screen and return to the start point before you run out of moves, you can start a new, harder maze.

Collecting a bug or a frog gives access to one of four submazes where you have to collect some poison and kill a spider before you are returned to the main maze.

Wandering around the maze are loads of nasties (crabs and spiders) — one touch from one and you'll lose one of your lives. If you feel threatened by one of the nasties then you can shoot them with one of your limited bombs. This will dispose of it for a while — it'll return after a short period of time so watch out!

At the beginning of the game you can set the skill level on a scale of 0 to 9 peruse the instructions sheets, which describe the various bugs and beasties you will meet.

CRITICISM

● **'I thought the age of** really **dire Spectrum games were over, but I was wrong. This is one of the worst games I've seen for quite some time. Not only is the plot archaic but the flickery characters and awful sound make this a real classic in the 1985 role of feeble Spectrum games. Gameplay is dull and** awfully **boring, after all we've seen it all before just too many times.'**

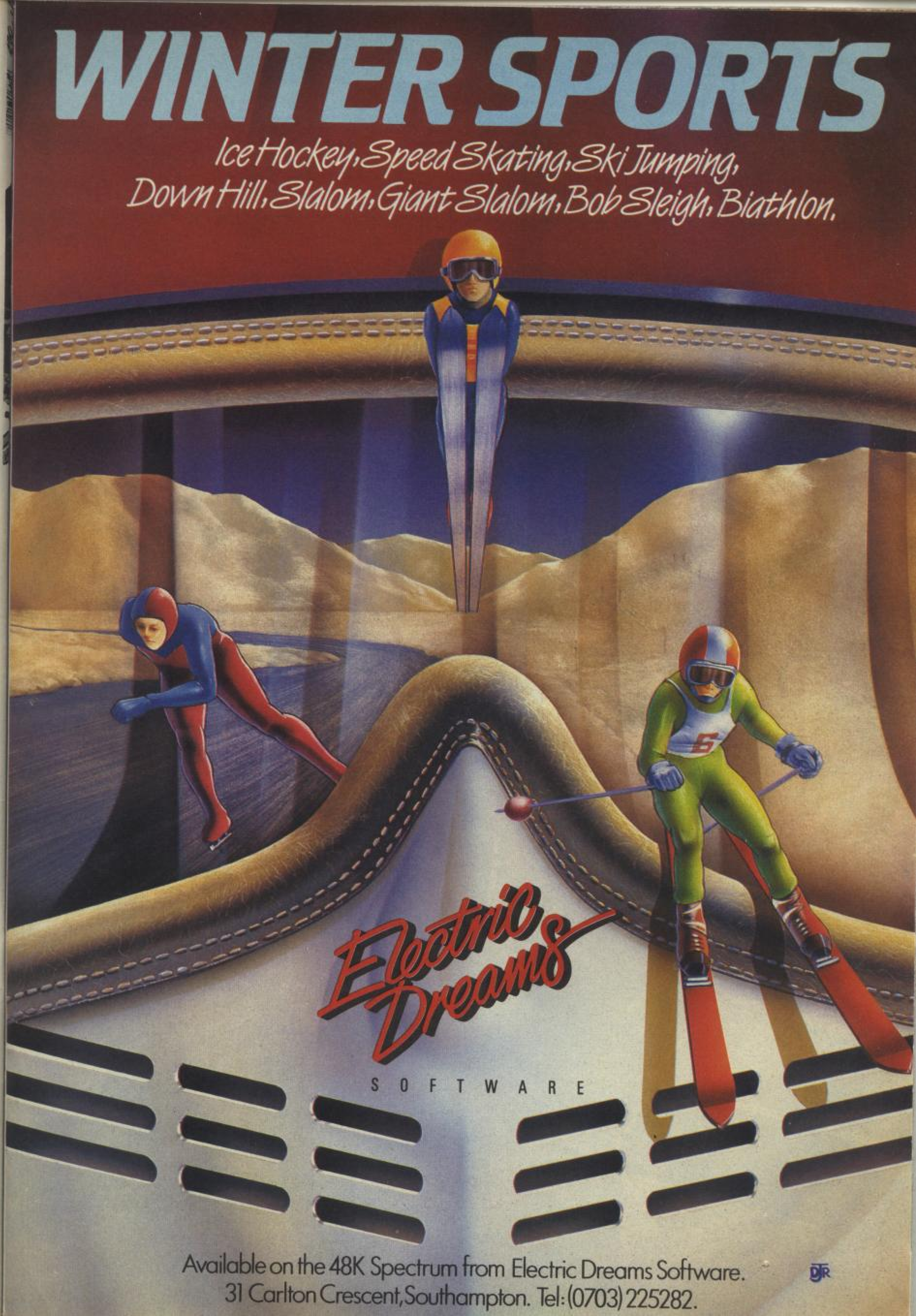
● *'Yawn, I haven't seen a game like this since 1982 and then it wouldn't have been too hot compared to some of the goodies around then. The graphics are jerky, badly animated and generally primitive, sound is poorly used. Gameplay is infuriating, unplayable and unaddictive. I really can't see how IDL is supposed to sell a product that is out of date, badly produced and overpriced at seven quid I couldn't see anyone I know buying it. Perhaps this is IDL's version of Firebirds collection of poor games* Don't Buy This.

● 'Oh dear. Not a bad little game hidden away in there really, but the presentation leaves so much to be desired. All the polish and sophistication of *Maziacs* but a couple of years later. The routines that drive the game aren't that smart and the graphics are horrible — block moving went out ages ago. Might have gone down well as a listing in a magazine, but probably wouldn't be accepted by many publishers nowadays.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: A,Z,5 left; S,X,8 right; N,K,7 Up; M,L,6 down; space,V fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: choice of keys a little awkward, responsive
Use of colour: elementary
Graphics: elementary, no animation just movement
Sound: little noises
Skill levels: one
Screens: four
General rating: three years too late

Use of computer	55%
Graphics	28%
Playability	45%
Getting started	45%
Addictive qualities	34%
Value for money	21%
Overall	29%


WINTER SPORTS
Ice Hockey, Speed Skating, Ski Jumping,
Down Hill, Slalom, Giant Slalom, Bob Sleigh, Biathlon.
Electric Dreams
SOFTWARE
Available on the 48K Spectrum from Electric Dreams Software.
31 Carlton Crescent, Southampton. Tel: (0703) 225282.



Thirty copies of the new Gargoyle game SWE
up



WIN A Ferguson MONITOR† TELLY IN THIS SWEEVO COMPO

The robot, SWEEVO — which stands for Self-motivated Extreme Environment Vocational Organism — is a bit of a bungler. He's a fairly amiable sort of robot, one of a line of machines designed to operate in hostile environments — in the kind of place where no man likes to go. The trouble is, the world he's been assigned to is hostile in a very strange sort of way. Not the usual poison gasses for atmosphere and molten lava for ground. That sort of thing's too straightforward, too normal.

No, poor old Sweevo's been dumped in a very weird world indeed. He has to cope with a Horrid Little Girl, for instance, who keeps dashing in, hitting him and dashing out again. There's a Dictator too, who's a pretty nasty piece of work plus a whole host of things, thingummies and whatsits all out to confound and confuse poor ol' Sweevo as he bumbles around doing his best.

The game itself takes place on Sweevo's World **and is really a sort of computerised Tag — you have to scamper around, chasing the other characters until you get within range. As an arcade adventure goes, Sweevo's World is going to be more than a little different — full of visual humour as Sweevo blunders about his world in his accident-prone way. Lots of slapstick humour is involved in the game . . . .**

Gargoyle have made a bit of a departure from their more familiar style of game with Sweevo's World **— it's a** Gargoyle Special Edition **no less, and will sell for £7.95. You'll still have the Gargoyle 3D graphics with their excellent animation, but the game is easy to get into, being room-based and fun right from the start.**

To mark the launch of *Sweevo's World*, the nice Greg Follis at Gargoyle 'phoned up to offer no less than a Ferguson monitor TV as first prize for this competition. And, what's more, there are thirty copies of the game on offer as runner up prizes. Can't be bad, eh? But even better — all the wondrous Mr Follis wanted you lot to do, was to work out this wordsearch puzzle!

A monitor for doing a wordsearch puzzle . . . can't beat that can you. Other people would expect all sorts of difficult problems to be solved as a competition entry, but not Gregorovitch Folliski. Gerron on with it quick, 'fore he changes his mind! You've got till the 21st November to get your entries in.

SWEEVO's WORLD for grabs

Crash Competition

FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS IN THE GARGOYLE WORDSEARCH

- SWEEVO
- GARGOYLE
- GAMES
- FERGUSON
- MONITOR
- DICTATOR
- LITTLEGIRL
- WORLD
- SPECIAL
- EDITION
- ROBOTS
- ORGANISM
- VOCATION
- ENVIRONMENT
- EXTREME

Y	M	G	L	T	T	E	V	L	S	I	O	N
I	O	R	G	A	N	I	S	M	E	E	R	I
X	N	R	E	X	V	M	T	W	X	G	G	G
T	I	L	W	E	O	T	O	A	E	X	F	A
N	T	D	A	D	S	S	B	E	T	E	A	R
E	O	L	V	I	V	W	O	O	R	W	V	G
M	R	R	R	T	C	I	R	G	E	N	A	O
N	G	O	C	I	X	E	U	S	M	M	R	Y
O	O	T	A	O	I	S	P	M	E	D	W	L
R	B	A	O	N	O	C	T	S	V	L	O	E
I	G	T	A	N	L	E	I	S	T	R	Y	X
V	O	C	A	T	I	O	N	T	A	O	R	O
N	R	I	Y	O	N	L	X	D	Y	W	P	S
E	O	D	L	R	I	G	E	L	T	T	I	L

SWEEVO's WORLD COMPO
CRASH MAGAZINE
PO Box 10, Ludlow
Shropshire
SY8 1DB

TEN-FOUR FOR A SUPER PRIZE!

Win a video of the film CONVOY

25 Juggernauts to be won in CRL's Lorry-Drivin' Comp

Crash Competition

(No, not the 32 tonners, the game from CRL, frogbrain!)

So you think you'd make a good trucker eh? Well trucking's not all about driving around in shiny cabs munching chocolate bars and smiling at the girls for the benefit of an advertising agency's cameras, you know. You've got to be able to drive the vehicle in the first place, then you need to be able to find your way to places, pick up loads, deliver them on time **and** be able to eat a greasy sossy sarnie with a mug of tea at a caff off the M-wotever without being sick after all that chocolate.

Not an easy job, pal, this lorry driving lark. You could always get in a bit of practice with CRL's whizzo lorry manipulating game, *Juggernaut*, which was programmed by the same chap who's currently working on Tau Ceti (Previewed elsewhere). Anyway, once we'd previewed Tau Ceti we filled CRL's Ian Ellery with some Old Flatulence Bitter to loosen his judgement a little, and put it to him that it was about time he did a competition.

O.F. did the trick yet again, your 'umble expense-accountless minion is pleased to be able to report back. Ellery coughed up — just prizes folks, just prizes — and as a consequence there's a video of the film Convoy to give away as first prize, with thirty copies of *Juggernaut* the game on offer as consolation prizes. Just for a chuckle, and to do something different, it seemed a good idea to have a little quiz based on some Citizen's Band Slang (you have to know all about such things, to be a good waggon driver of course).

So here goes. Entries in please by 21st November to

WAGGONS ROLL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

Translate these CB phrases into something approaching English

1) 10.10 till we do it again

2) What's your twenty?

3) How many candles you burnin'?

4) Give us a nine

5) Bears in a jam sandwich

6) What's your handle?




NVOY!

DESIGN DESIGN BIT NUMBER THREE

In which the Saga is continued by Simon. Or is it Psi? Graham is getting married, Poddy's going to be famous and the lads nearly get nicked taking photies for the inlay of a game . . . .



Rubber band wars nearly become an international incident, as the DESIGN DESIGN Designers loose off a few shots into the Ludlow void. A man in a car by the name of McCracken wasn't too impressed . . . .

Hello everybody! Back again, though this time all on my own. Not a Stafford in sight. Why? I hear you ask. Simple, he's run away. Please do not panic at this earth shattering news, Graham is still part of the team, but he's moved to Birmingham. The reason behind this is really very simple, Graham has made a boob of the first magnitude. He's going to get MARRIED! (Thousands of female Crash readers swoon with frustrated passion.) Sorry girls, you've missed your chance, you've all been outwitted by one Ruth Williams of Wales.

On the twenty first of December, in a small Welsh town called Ruthin, there will be a gathering of Programmers, Programmers' relatives, Programmers' girlfriends and large numbers of Ruth's family. The upshot of all this fuss is that Ruth becomes a Stafford, and Graham gives up girlfriends, for food processors, washing machines, three piece suites and of course Ruth. We, meanwhile have to rummage through the bowels of our respective wardrobes/cardboard boxes to find suitable attire for such a high society function. God knows what Wook will do if they give him anything less than a pint pot to drink out of.

Less of Graham's social problems, and on to what he's been working on. Graham's Game has now been officially named, it is no longer known as Graham's me, but is now dubbed *2112 AD*. The reasoning behind this is twofold: first this was the day they stormed the Bastille!, which ties in with the scenario of overthrowing a form of government, and secondly the 21st of the 12th is the date of Graham's wedding!!!!!

(Just to amend my first statement, I am no longer alone, there appears to be some sort of 'Jamming session' going on. A friend of ours by the name of Abdul, is the proud owner of a Yamaha Music Computer. He's written some software for it, and Simon is busy putting it onto eprom for him. Meanwhile the 'lads' have found the Yamaha.)

Anyway onto what 2112 AD is looking like. Graham has gone away and come up with a new method of projecting 3D Graphics. Imagine, if you will, a camera mounted above and behind your player. This tracks forward and backwards as you move, with objects disappearing as they go out of your field of view and reappearing as you move back again. I still don't know exactly what this is going to look like, but the day before he ran away to Birmingham, he had a demo going which looked like a small piece of the Parthenon wandering about in a field full of Simmons drums. Still I have every confidence that Stuart will be able to make things look a bit more credible. KY, by the way, has now been christened a little more sociably as **Poddy** after Jeremy's animated hearthrug. Graham is currently developing the icon driven control of Poddy, but you'll have to wait till next month to find out what this looks like; I haven't seen Graham since he disappeared in an Astra stuffed with ironing boards, coffee tables, teles and the like.

Graham is in for a shock if he comes back to Manchester for a weekend. What was his bedroom is now an open plan office in which I have my desk, phones, photocopier etc, and Simon has his computers. It's quite a nice atmosphere, but the real reason for the move is that the view is better from this room. It also means I can watch Simon writing *Forbidden Planet*. Well I say writing . . . a more accurate statement would be watching Simon's frantic bursts of typing, separated by screams, beatings of Spectrums and shouts of 'Hey Si, come and look at this!'.

As well as a lot of computers, Simon has also put a 200 watt valve amp in the office. I had some misgivings about this from the start. My worst fears were proven the other night. Mott had come round to see us, and after a few pints in the Junction, he fell asleep on the sofa with his head inches away from one of my speakers. Sppotting an oportunity not to be missed, Simon fired up his mega-amp and into one end he plugged a signal generator, and into the other he plugged my speaker. A few seconds later Mott's head (and in fact most of the room) was bouncing about at 50hz. Mott however, refused to wake up; even when my bass unit exploded Mott still slumbered on. In all fairness to Simon, it only took him ten hours and an access card to replace my mangled bass unit.

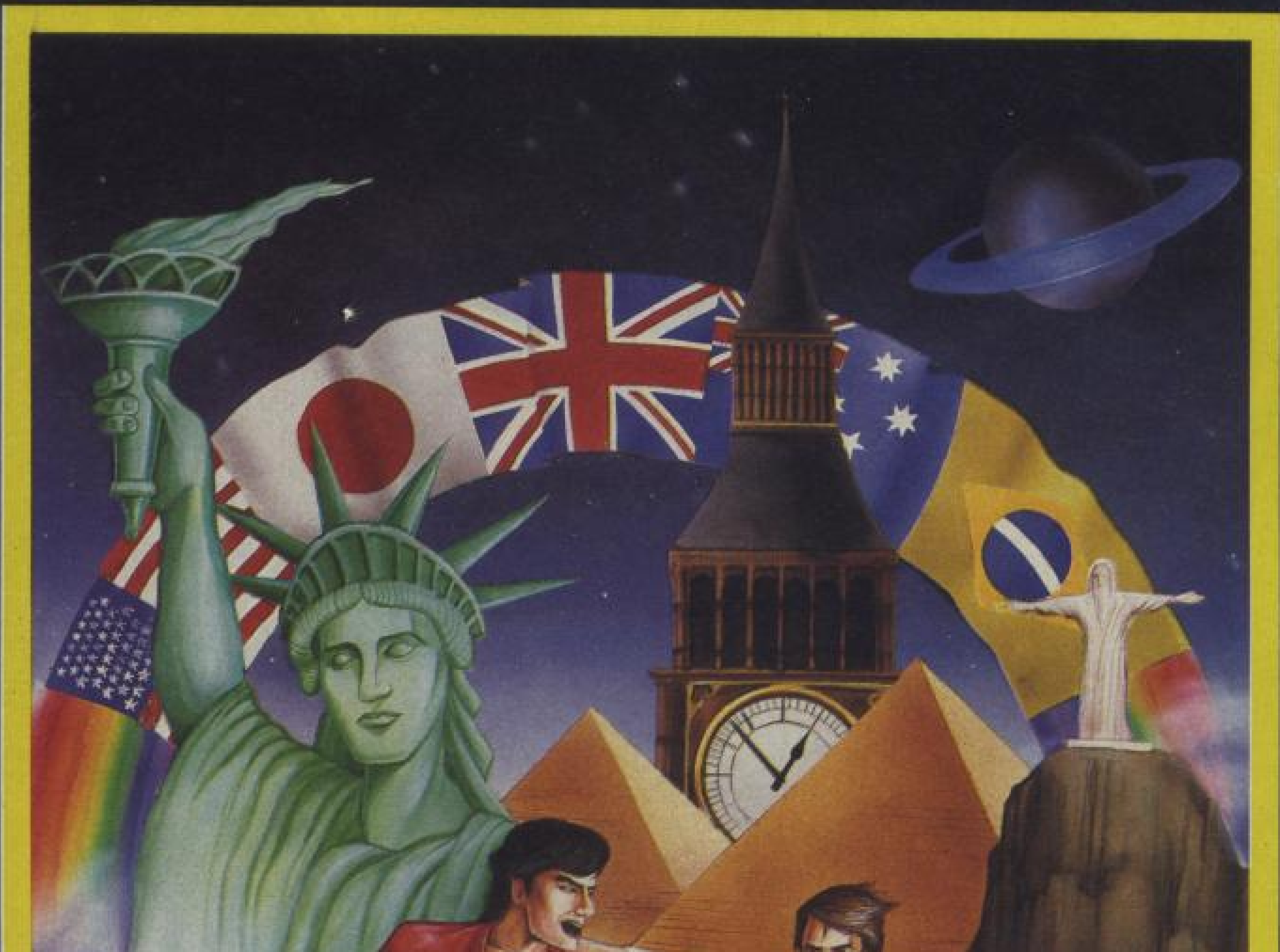
Apart from moving furniture about the house and causing things to explode, Simon **has** been writing bits of *Forbidden Planet*. The inevitable Design Design style front end is written, complete with multiple high score tables, strange responses and things drawn in the border. If time permits, Simon intends to have a screen editor in the high scores, thus enabling one to edit someone else's entry.

As to what the actual game itself is doing, well remember the towers in *Dark Star*? Imagine not being able to see past them. Yes folks, *Forbidden Planet* does proper windowing. You can't see through the force fields on *Forbidden Planet*, though you can see through the holes in them. Also look out for intelligent missiles which follow you about with embarrassing consequences. There will be a way of coping with these nasties, but you will need to have found (or deduced) the relevent I.F.F. code for the area your ship is in. If you're wondering what this is and how you find it, well, you will have to wait and see.

We have spent a few nights and many gallons of petrol driving about Wales with Keith Jordan, our photographer, in search of the picture for the cover of F.P. As is our luck, this involved yet another run in with one of those day-glo coated Range Rovers, the ones with all thoes pretty blue and red lights on top. There we were at three in the morning, halfway across a motorway bridge, innocently wandering about on the hard shoulder with a camera and tripod, when out of nowhere there materialised a Police car. Not suprisingly, a Policeman got out and told us to go away before we got run over. He'd got a point I suppose, but Keith was more worried about the two hundred foot drop off the bridge — he can't stand heights! To let Keith calm down we gave up the motorway bridge in favour of the top of a cliff and a tele-photo lens. Keith was getting a little hysterical by the end of the night! The funny thing is, the photo we are probably going to use was taken on a canal bank at about ten feet above sea level. Thanks must also be expressed to Keith for leaving his camera with us, thus enabling us to take the photos for the Amtix competition.

Well that's about it for this month's installment of Designasty, (Question:- Why can't we have a Joan Collins? She'd do wonders for us at trade fairs!) so I must now go away and worry about such things as the Amstrad Computer Show, which occurs this weekend, and how to persuade Simon to get his nose and soldering iron out of that Yamaha, and put this article onto tape in a form that Cwash's word-pros can understand. See you next month, I'm off to Securicor with some more tapes for you lot!

INTERNATIONAL KARATE



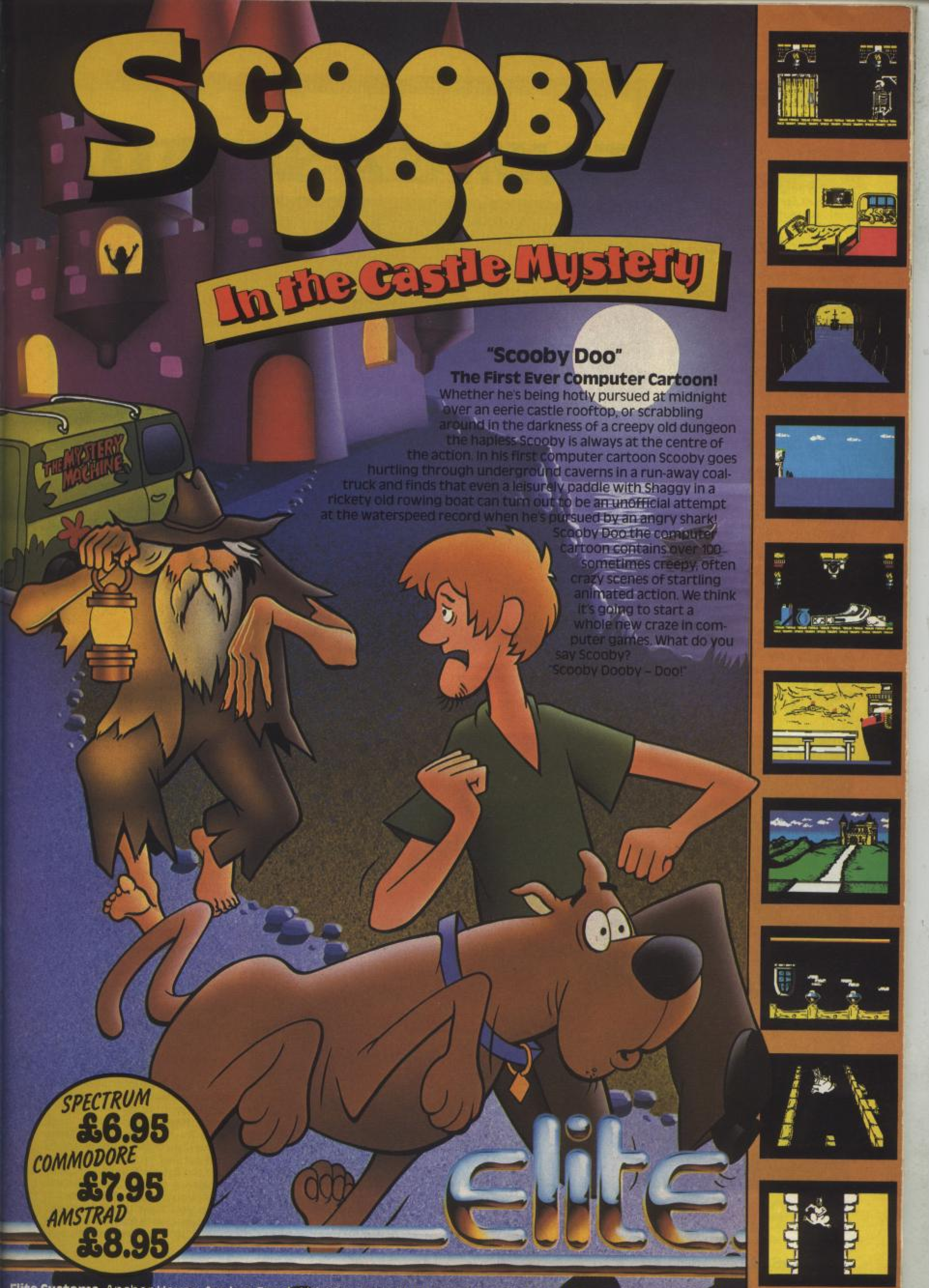
..And you thought you'd seen a Karate game

As you know, like the Martial Arts, Perfection is the only accepted standard, so play nothing until you play — SYSTEM 3's — INTERNATIONAL KARATE

For the Spectrum, C.64, Amstrad and all 48k Ataris at ONLY

£6.50

SYSTEM 3 SOFTWARE, SOUTHBANK HOUSE, BLACK PRINCE ROAD, LONDON SE1 TEL: 01-735 8171 Ex. 68



Elite Systems, Anchor House, Anchor Road, Aldridge, Walsall, England. Tel: (0922) 59165 "Consumer Hotline"

TAKING A SHUFTI AT

In which SEAN MASTERSON gets some hands-on experience with the new game from CRL, due out in time for Christmas.

One thing about being a Crash minion — there's no rest for the wicked. And so it was on a sunny morning in late September (in fact it was late in the morning, but you wouldn't believe the relationship I have with British Rail) that I entered Crash Towers with a smile on my face, ready for a peaceful day at the office. On entering the chambers of the Holy Ones, I was introduced to Ian Ellery and Pete Cooke from CRL.
'They've come to show us their new game,' **said Jeremy in his usual explanatory manner.**
'Ah . . . ' **I said, wondering if this meant that I couldn't grab an urgently needed coffee.**
'So look after them and do a preview. Bye.' **Whereupon Jeremy retreated to his Amstrad, muttering something about the superiority of CPM as opposed to MSDOS. The two bearded men from CRL looked horrified that they had been left in the hands of someone who was obviously only moments away from death through overwork. But, as with all good stories, everything worked out for the best, as you will see . . .**

Pete Cooke, the programmer is obviously into science fiction and admits taking inspiration from authors like Niven and games like *Elite*. I soon realised I was dealing with a man of taste. '*Elite* was good — very good. But I knew something could be done with solid graphics and shading', Pete explained. He reached for the microdrive . . .

Tau Ceti is only set a hundred and ninety years from now — relatively soon for a game scenario with such a history behind it, and involving such technological advances. *Tau Ceti*'s history is in the form of Pete's own vision of the future: Humankind invents the interstellar ramscoop, an efficient way of travelling between the stars at sub-light speeds. Colonisation of nearby worlds follows and this includes an expedition to *Tau Ceti* because it has a G type star (similar to our Sun).

Colonisation of Tau Ceti is successful, but eventually links with Earth are lost and the colony is destroyed. A recolonisation attempt takes place and reports are sent back of robot activity being maintained on the planet Tau Ceti III. Shortly afterwards, contact with this mission is lost and it is presumed destroyed. Better prepared, a second expedition sets out from Earth. In 2174 AD the expedition arrives . . .

Defence robots continue to patrol the cities of Tau Ceti III, following their original instructions to eliminate intruders even though their masters have long since died. Your mission is to explore the planet, and shut down the main reactor which powers the defence robots. This may be achieved by collecting segments of cooling rods which have been scattered across the cities and need to be assembled and installed in the main reactor. Needless to say, the robots don't want you to succeed and so they threaten death at every turning.

You pilot a craft despatched from your mothership and sit in the cockpit with the screen display in front of you. Pete hadn't quite finished coding the display when he showed me the game, but all the major elements were there. The main window can display a planetary map which reveals the pathways between cities (useful for Inter City warp travel — they do it better on Tau Ceti III!). This window also provides your view onto the cityscape when you are exploring at groundlevel, and is used for the construction and placement screens for the cooling rod puzzles.

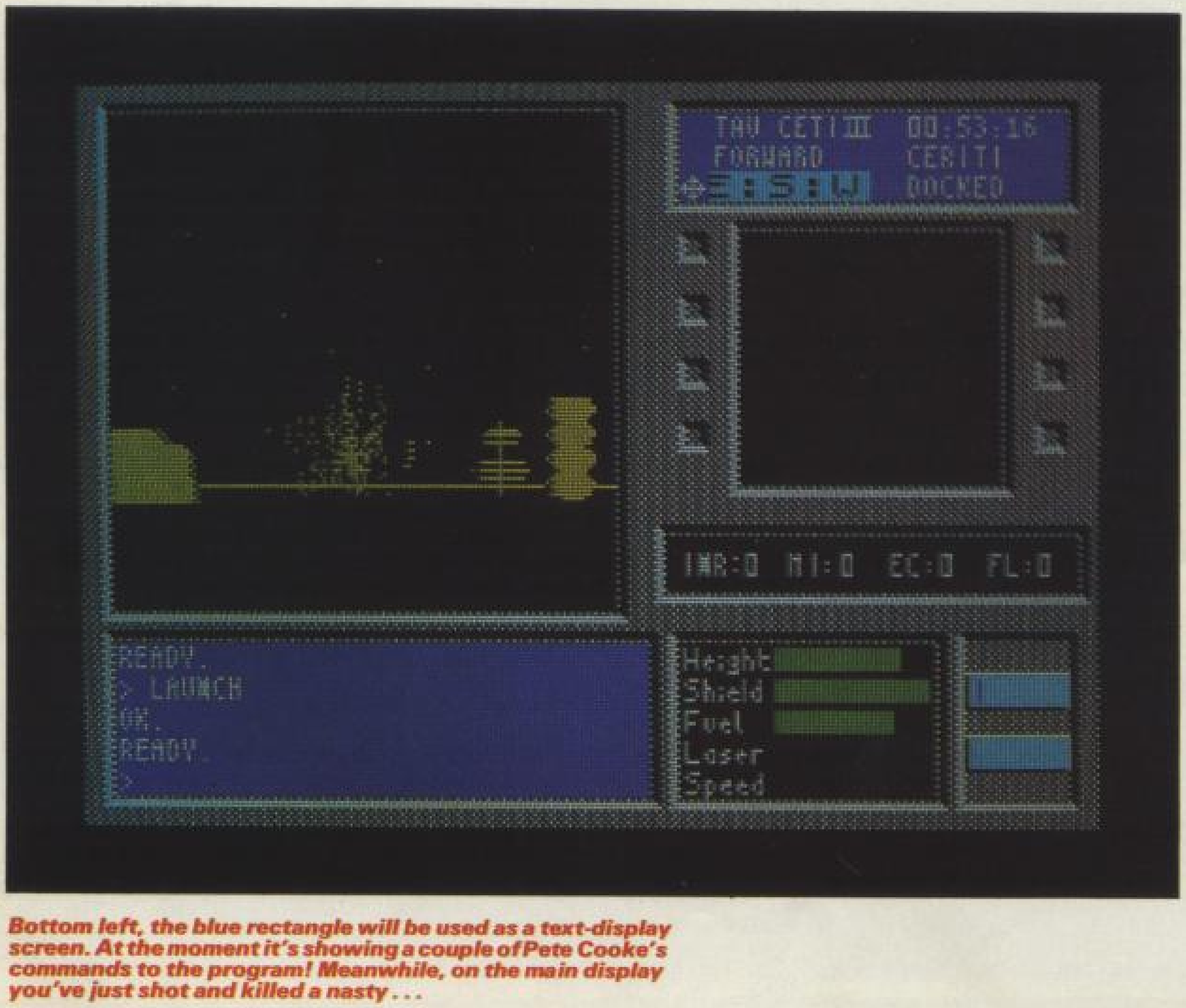
Below the main screen there's a text input display for special commands. On the right there is a clock (presumably running to Ceti III mean time), compass, view confirmation (such as front, back etc) and various status indicators. All are clearly laid out and the 'control panel' effect works very well. The main thing missing from this version was the small area map which had yet to be added.

Once you enter a city, you may begin your explorations. Most of the landscape before you will be in the form of hi—tech ruins. Various robots will inhabit the city and they are your main worry. Some are harmless, like the hoppers and the servo droids. Others are more deadly, like the saucers, and attack you instantly with laser beams. You have a variety of weapons to counter them with. Lasers are cheap on energy but not overly effective. Missiles are deadly but you have a limited supply. You also have anti—missile missiles for point defence.

Because you will sometimes be operating in night zones, you have an infra-red vision capability which you can use — alternatively you can set off a flare. When I played this unfinished version, my ship was indestructible and I could wipe out everything in sight. Of course Pete Cooke intends to change all this by the time the game is released in October — but I didn't mind. I actually did well on an arcade game for once!.

If you find what you're looking for then the best move is probably to leave straight away. A kind of matter transport network still exists, linking the cities in a complex grid which you can examine from your planetary map. You can find operating jump-junctions in every city but they have a limited number of destination points. Journeying between the cities is accomplished by entering the vicinity of one of the jump points (they have four, cornered boundaries at the limit of their effectiveness) and setting up the right command. An interesting 'hyperspace' sequence follows and when it is over, you are in the next city.

As you fight or explore your way around a city, the day is going by, the sun changes pos-



Bottom left, the blue rectangle will be used as a text-display screen. At the moment it's showing a couple of Pete Cooke's commands to the program! Meanwhile, on the main display you've just shot and killed a nasty . . .

TAU CETI

The control console for TAU CETI, CRL's Christmas Game. The right hand display window's display hadn't been coded when we saw the game, but the stunning shadows on the cityscape were all there in the main viewscreen . . .



ition accordingly. This results in what is one of the most cunning features of the game. As the angle of incident light changes, so do the images of the buildings and robots. Shadows lengthen and silhouettes appear, until total darkness eventually envelops the landscape. If you fight by nothing but starlight, then all you see are the vaguest of outlines and the occasional laser beam. That's why you need the Infra-red option. On the final version, infra-red will actually turn things red on black but at the time of writing, everything was yellow on black. Flares will only last a moment but they should provide quite a stunning effect because they, as well as lasers, will cause reflective flashes on nearby objects. The robots also will explode in different ways, depending on their design.

CRL are justifiably proud to be publishing *Tau Ceti*. Graphically it's quite different in terms of the use of light and shadow and some of the displays I was treated to were quite stunning. It's difficult to describe the effect when a robot flys by and you turn around to follow it, seeing it in silhouette as it flies towards the sun, before exploding across the screen as a homing missile plunges into its rear armour! Look out for *Tau Ceti*. It promises to be very good indeed.

THE ZOIDS ARE COMING, THE ZOIDS ARE COMING!

After his experiences of playing with Zoids in a London caff, surrounded by the members of the Electronic Pencil Company, it seemed natural to let Jeremy Red Horn the Terrible Spencer loose on DAVID MARTIN and CHRIS FAYERS from Martech when they travelled all the way up to Ludlow to let us have a sneak look at the new Zoid game, THE BATTLE BEGINS . . .

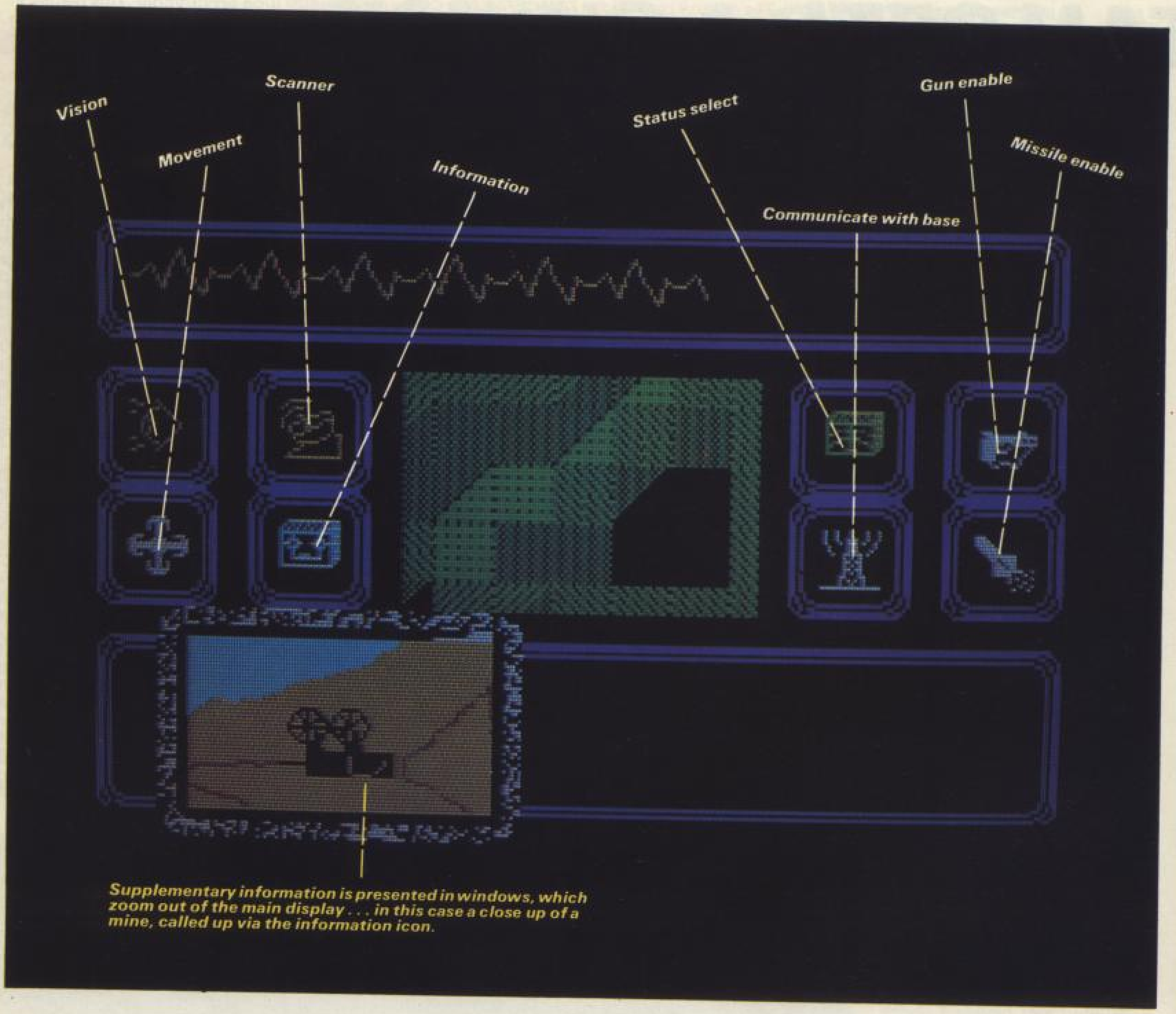
IF IT HADN'T been for their Zoid breaking down David and Chris would have made Ludlow in much better condition than they did. As it was they were forced to drive, in a car. Now it was inevitable that a visit from the Zoid providers was going to arouse more than a passing interest from the Zoidless ones in the office. It was all we could do to stop Graeme rummaging his way through David's briefcase trying to scrounge yet another pre-historic/future fighting monster. As soon as he realised that David hadn't come bearing Zoids he went into a corner and sulked, well, only until David produced the the partially completed Zoid game, *The Battle Begins*.

David Martin chanced upon the Zoids in foreign parts. The idea of writing a series of games around these new toys struck him like a blast from a diaphanite laser. Since so much imagination has gone into the design of the toys the same would have to be done for the games. You may remember from an earlier CRASH that the Zoids game is being designed by the **Electronic Pencil Company** of *Fourth Protocol* fame. Chris Fayers, who accompanied David to the Towers, is the man responsible for stuffing all of the ideas and imagery into a Spectrum.

The main idea behind the game demands that you are not simply sitting inside a Zoid steering it from left to right. After all a Zoid is no mere machine, it is a mechanised animal, it thinks for itself and reacts to its environment according to its disposition. They possess their own survival instincts and to a very large extent their own sense of purpose. The enemy Zoids are 'piloted' by androids but you must pilot whichever Zoid you start off with, and learn to understand the way a Zoid reacts to its environment so that you can manipulate it.

The control panel in front of you offers a series of icons that represent the interface between yourself and the Zoid. The icons are the means by which you invoke certain functions. For example to move from one area to another you select the MOVE icon and then move a cross over the map until it is over the location you wish to visit. At this point the Zoid takes over and finds a route between the points taking into account the terrain and any obstructions that may represent a danger either to itself or to you.

When you come face to face with another Zoid with whom you have idealogical differences, you may want to blow it to bits. This means activating your battle systems. On one mini-screen you see a 3D picture of the enemy Zoid and another showing bird's a eye view of your Zoid and the enemy Zoid, on a *Tron*-like grid. After firing a missile you are able to pilot the



Supplementary information is presented in windows, which zoom out of the main display . . . in this case a close up of a mine, called up via the information icon.

The control console from ZOIDS. Eight icons give you access to controls, while a central map shows you where you are. At the top is a continuous readout of your Zoid's general state of health — a 'heartbeat' — while at the bottom is the area for text messages including status readouts.

weapon to its target, and you can see, on a mini-screen, a forward view taken from the missile's camera as it wings its way to the target.

Another icon is STATUS. This provides you with a continuous readout of a function. Perhaps, for instance, you need to keep a constant eye on the state of the weapons systems, in which case this is constantly displayed on the status screen, but if at any time another function begins to fail to the point where the Zoid is unhappy about it, then it interrupts your readout and presents you with a warning. Whatever you decide to do, your action can be vetoed by the Zoid because one of its overriding programs is that of self preservation, which in the long run is no bad thing as you are, after all, inside the creature.

Your task in the first game is to destroy the Red Zoids. The only safe way of doing this is by enlisting the help of your ace Zoid, the mighty Zoidzilla. While he is not idestructable he is more than a match for all but two of the Red Zoids. However the best laid plans of Zoids and men are oft come to naught . . .

The story so far: Rather unwisely, Zoidzilla, anxious to get into battle, has tried to make his entrance from space, through the planet's atmosphere without protection. The result is that Zoidzilla has been rendered into many parts, scattered across the planet. Before you can hope to rid Zoidsville of the evil Red Zoids you must recover Zoidzilla's component parts. This involves making planetfall and scooting around the place. At first you are given a Zoid of a pretty low order, but you are given upgrades as you defeat other Zoids and move nearer to your goal.

The game allows for a total of nine levels of strategy, but that's not to say that a pure arcade fan cannot derive a lot of fun from the game because it can be played at a lower level, so long as you give up the ultimate aim of piloting the Mighty Zoidzilla. While you cannot complete the game without getting yourself fully involved in its strategy, it is also true that a strategist would need a good measure of arcade skill to cope with the demands made by the action part of the game.

David and Chris resisted all normal means of extracting information, even a bear hug from Aunty Aggie in mail order failed to elicit the inner secrets of the game. However from what they let slip it's quite obvious that there will be a dire need to call up outside help through use of one of the icons. A quick radio call to base might be useful in all sorts of tight spots, but the nasty leer on David's face when he explained why one might call up base, made us all uneasy — so take care when dealing with your base. Something else we learned was that you would be well advised to check over any Zoids that you dispatch, to see what you can recover from the carcass. However, it's very clear that everything you learn about the planet you are on, the enemy cities and many different types of Zoids, can only be learned from experience. Each enemy Zoid has an intelligence of its own and strengths and weaknesses peculiar to that Zoid. The strategy of the game demands that you discover for yourself how best to deal with the multitude of problems that await you.

THE 1,000 QUESTION SUPERQUIZ



QUIZ QUEST

and it doesn't stop there...

... that's because there are not only over 200 questions on each of your favourite subjects, pop, sport, general knowledge (easy and hard) and TV but also a self-program tape from which you can make up your very own quiz games.

Spend hours of enjoyment with friends and family in light-hearted fun and even put yourself to test on homework and revision.
Available at all good computer stockists or direct from Alligata (P&P inclusive).
Look out for the follow up tapes at only £1.99 each or the Quiz Quest book to be published shortly with over 3,000 additional questions.

Spectrum 48K

Alligata Software Ltd.,
1 Orange Street, Sheffield S1 4DW. Tel: (0742) 755796

METALLIC MESSIAH

It all happened at the Personal Computer World Show. It almost happened at the Newsfield stand, where Mr Urquart downed a few cans of the complimentary lager we had in store for chums. But happen it did. Somewhere, at the PCW Show, on the Saturday, an agreement was signed between Mike Baxter (a Big Cheese at Solutions PR), Christian Urquart and Mike Smith (programmers).

Thus was a new software company by the name of **Alphabatim** born. Christian, Mike and and Mike came to Ludlow the other day, to show us how work was progressing on *Robot Messiah*. This is what we saw . . .



By the time you read this, what with the delay involved in typesetting and printing, Alphabatim's first game should be on the streets. When we saw *Robot Messiah* most of the screens had been committed to Spectrum memory and Microdrive cartridge. The animation sequence for the main character had been finished and the game designed — but the finished game was still a couple of weeks away.

Robot Messiah is an arcade adventure which stars a worker robot by the name of Sid. Sid's mission in life is to save the downtrodden worker robot race on an android-run planet from an eternity of slavery.

Eons ago, the planet was visited by humans who designed and built a robot mining operation. Androids – with human traits such as ambition, determination and greed – were put in charge of the worker robots which actually did the mining. The humans left – and never came back. But the worker robots continue to labour in the catacombs, driven on mercilessly by the android race of robots, forced to continue mining the rare minerals contained in the planet's crust. The androids merely pile up these minerals on the planet's surface, using them for decorative purposes.

Conditions in the mines are horrific. The worker robots live and toil in an environment full of acidic dust which attacks their circuits and bodyshells, corroding and damaging them beyond repair. Driven on by unpleasant gnome creatures, worker robots do not survive very long in the mines. They slow down progressively, finally crumbling into dust which is trodden underfoot by their replacements, sent in by the androids.

A classic case of slavery. This state of affairs could have continued for eternity, but one android, amongst all the rest, was different – Socrates. Socrates believed that all robots, worker and android, were built equal and said so. This did not go down well with the other androids, who saw revolution on the horizon . . . so they punished Socrates by reprogramming him and sending him to the mines as a worker robot. So that he should suffer, it seems they only reprogrammed him partially – leaving elements of his original persona intact.

For many years Socrates labours in the mines, and gradually his dream of liberating the workers from their pointless labours fades. The acid dust takes its toll on his components. He is on the point of giving in, and allowing his lifeforce to ebb. Then news of Sid, a worker robot who speaks of overthrowing the androids and preaches rebellion reaches the expiring Socrates. Forcing his circuits to remain active, Socrates finds Sid and tells him that beyond the mines a greater hell can be found – a maze of tunnels and caves which contains a sinister test centre. Scattered around this complex are three fragments of program which, if collected and assembled together, could be used to reprogram a worker robot and convert him to an android.

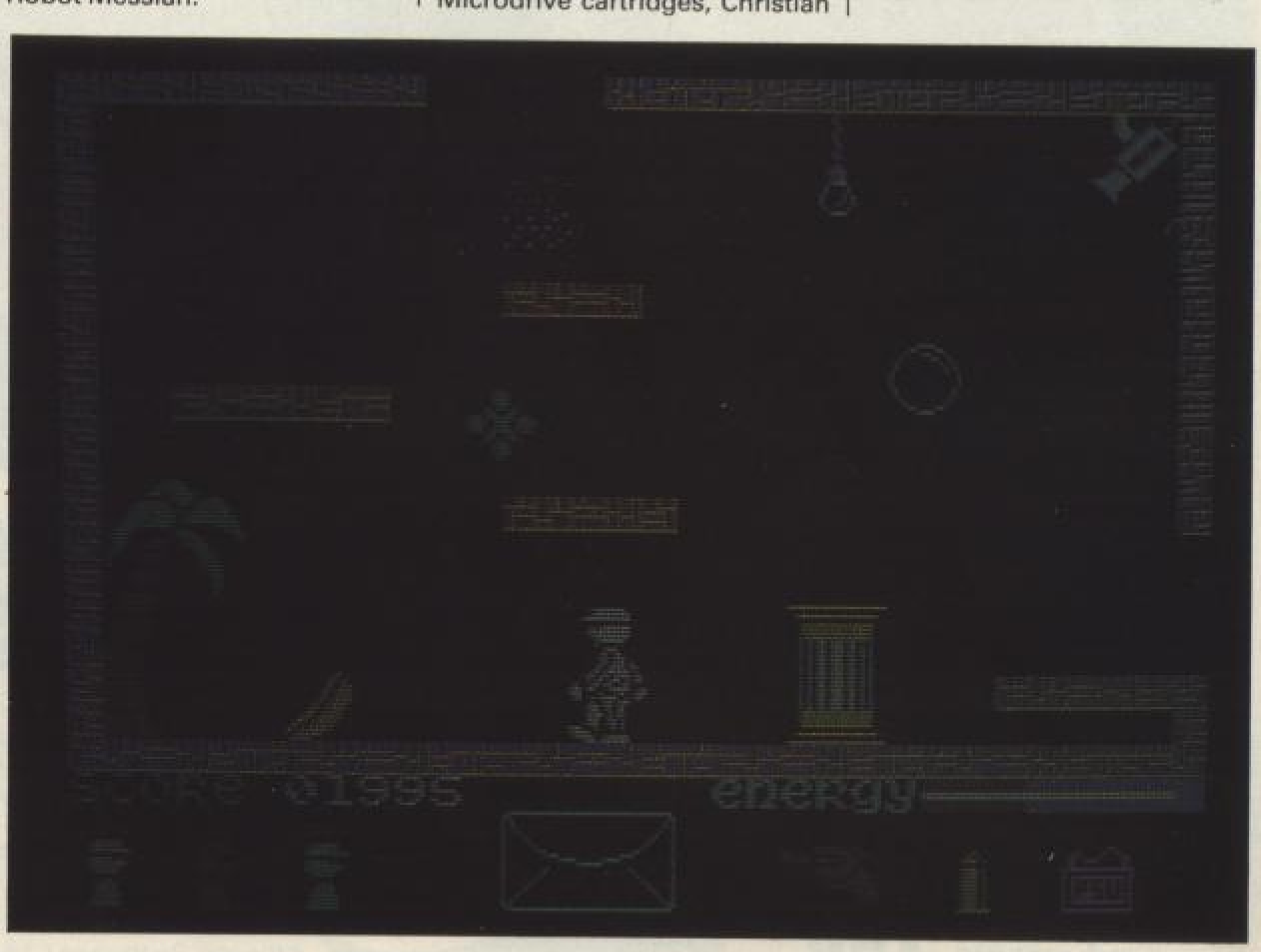
The ailing Socrates convinces Sid that salvation for the worker robots is attainable. Socrates finally allows himself to cease to be, once he has passed on the secret of the fragmented program, and starts to crumble into dust. Sid, however, sets out on his quest . . . to find the elements of the program that will allow him to become an android and save the slaves. He is to be the Robot Messiah.

You control the Saviour of the Robot Race in the game – who is a strange looking figure. At first glance Sid looks rather like a cross between a Woodentop and a Flowerpot Man! That's not being rude . . . he just moves in a rather odd way. When he jumps, instead of the more usual sproing from a standing start seen in jumping games, Sid sort of coils himself up, bending down, leaning his chest forwards and swinging his arms behind his back before unwinding like a spring and leaping. It's really quite a neat bit of animation — very endearing.

As in most multi-screen arcade adventures, the rooms are full of rampaging nasties which Sid will have to shoot or avoid. And there are puzzles to solve and articles to collect on the way to finding the three program segments which will spell ultimate liberation for the workers.

Shuffling through his box of Microdrive cartridges, Christian loaded screen after screen into the Spectrum. "Look at that palm tree", Mr Smith chipped in, "isn't it great? We were wondering if we could put a coconut in there, so it could fall on Sid's head . . . ". Pointing out the yellow slave robots, mentioning the range of objects that would be lying round in the caverns, Mr Urquart explained how the blue gnome in the game was going to be 'fairly intelligent' and hunt Sid down. All the while, Sid stumped round the few locations that were ready for him, and sproinged across gaps in the floor and leaped onto platform.

A very good looking game indeed, this one. This year, there could be another Christmas hit programmed by Christian Urquart . . . . a bit different from the last one, *Daly Thompson's Decathalon*. We'll be reviewing the full game next issue. Promise.




GEOFF CAPES
STRONG MAN
★ Endorsed by Geoff Capes, Olympic shot putter, World and European Strongman and World Highland Games Champion.
★ On-screen training on weights or iron bars.
★ Continuous individual muscle fitness display.
★ Skill Levels and Hall of Fame.
★ SIX exciting and demanding challenges to be overcome.
★ TRUCK PULL OR TUG OF WAR.
★ CAR ROLLING.
★ BARREL LOADING.
★ FAIRGROUND BELL.
★ LOG CHOPPING.
★ WRESTLING.
Available from all leading software retailers OR order today by mail.
48K Spectrum £7.95. ALL OTHERS £8.95
CBM 64 disc £14.95
martech
Martech is the registered trade mark of Software Communications Limited
Martech House, Bay Terrace, Pevensey Bay, East Sussex BN24 6EE
TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME. PHONE: (0323) 768456 TELEX: 87465 EXIM Brighton
EFFORT
EFFORT
BARREL LOADING
EFFORT
EFFORT
48K SPECTRUM • COMMODORE 64 • BBC'B' • ELECTRON • AMSTRAD • MSX



LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM

The past few days have been enlivened by the advent of an Indian Summer. However, that's quite enough of all the Scott Fitz Gerald atmospherics. What's been happening on the games front? How many of you have something important to say to the rest of the world? And will any of it be relevant to playing computer games on a Spectrum? Probably not — this column seems to have become something of a general get it off the chest number lately. So much so that I seriously wonder whether anyone plays games at all any more . . . ?

There are two letters of the month this munf, from very different writers. First one off is answering some interesting points made by a writer in an earlier edition of CRASH.



SARAJCHEECH IVAN claims to be from Belgrade, but whoever he really is, and wherever he really hails from, the bugs are quite jolly!

MR SOFTWARE ANSWERS BACK

Dear Lloyd,
I would like the opportunity to take up a couple of points raised by David Thomas in his letter (CRASH 21 — October '85). Although David doesn't actually mention Mr Software in his letter, there are a number of very obvious pointers to this company which will be recognised by many of our members or potential members.

The first point David raises is about the reliability of games. This, as I'm sure every shop and mail order company up and down the country will confirm, is a thorny problem. About 11% of the games we send out are returned as 'faulty', which annoys the customer — who blames us — and costs us enormous amounts in postage and staff time. Our tapes are no more or less reliable than anybody else's — we purchase either from the manufacturers direct, or in most cases the bigger distributors. David was particularly unlucky in that two out of the four tapes he received were faulty and one of these had to be replaced a second time as that too, was faulty.

David's second point seems to be the fact that he had to write and notify us that he had not received a replacement tape. All companies make mistakes from time to time and Mr Software Ltd is no exception. However, we make strenuous efforts to follow up complaints and in David's case we sent him a £1 voucher simply as a way of saying we were sorry for the fact that he had had the inconvenience of writing to us. A letter of apology would have sufficed but no, we gave the added bonus of a voucher towards David's next purchase.

David's third point, and it is the one I would dispute most strongly, is that the reviews in our Club magazine are biased. I disagree with your comment, Lloyd that 'it's rather hard, if you are reviewing games only to sell them to be completely objective.' On the contrary, I take the view that **only** by reviewing games totally objectively will a company like ours gain the respect of its members and give the customers the confidence to come back for more. Our latest magazine, a copy of which is enclosed for your interest, has reviews of no less than thirty-eight different products and I challenge you or anyone else to point out one which shows a bias — either for or against. Why should we be biased? We have no connection with any software publisher and have absolutely nothing to gain by promoting a bad product, or for that matter slating a good one. As you yourself say, when CRASH made their reviews unbiased, the mail order side of the business increased. Likewise, we find honesty to be the best policy.
Tony Toller, Mr Software Ltd

I'll take my comment back, Tony, times have changed since early software mail order days, when each mini-review in a catalogue extolled a game's virtues regardless of the truth. According to our own mail order department, you are certainly correct about faulty tapes and what that ends up costing the mail order company in refunds, return postage, phone calls and the like. Although picked out as Letter of the Month, I'm sure you'll forgive me if I award the software to another reader — after all, you have enough of your own already!
LM

CLIMBING MOUNTAINS FOR CRASH

Dear LM,
I'm writing as a frustrated reader of your tremendous mag, which I receive each and every month, without fail. This, however, is not an amble down the street and an even slower amble back, flicking through the pages. Far from it, living here in Cyprus with HMF, I have a 35 mile drive down a mountain (now you're wondering what mountains there are in Cyprus; well they're not exactly your Alps — more of a small hill, about 6000ft high).

Once at the newsagent, I go in, all smiles only to be told by the maiden propping up the cash register (who is also smiling just as incessantly) that this month's mags haven't arrived yet. In total despair, I return to my unfeeling MG and begin the long drag back up the mountain, just to make a repeat performance a couple of days later, with only the possibility of a little more luck.

What's more, when your illustrious team of reviewers write to tell us all about the latest raves in the Spectrum charts, by the time I get the game, it's either been cracked by some incredibly intelligent mortal or the solution has been printed in your mag (not that I'm complaining about the second point). I'm not what you would call a particularly good gamer (having only completed 24.5% of *The Hobbit*).

If I am lucky enough to find a copy of a particular game, the difference in prices between the UK and here is quite substantial. Anyway, I hope that this little scribble touches your ticker and prompts you to send a couple of new releases for what must be the most monotonous letter of the month.

Now to the real point of this letter. Does CRASH allow subscriptions to BFPO addresses and if so, what is the damage likely to be?
Cpl J E Thornhill, RAF Troodos, BFPO 57

I think anyone who suffers so much for their CRASH deserves all the support they can get. 6000ft may not sound much, but I think it's almost twice the height of Ben Nevis. So how about this? A choice between the software, or a CRASH subscription, my maths aren't up to much, but I think overall both would work out about the same.
LM

Robot MESSIAH



Robot MESSIAH

You are the Robot Messiah, the one hope for your long suffering race, The Droids.

Imprisoned in mines of horrific torture, the Droids are worker robots, slaves to Androids and destined to misery.

As the Robot Messiah, you must set out against overwhelming odds — battle against giant bears, killer robots and evil gnomes. Explore a mind-boggling maze of caves, escape from a wretched tunnel until, in the sinister test centre you can begin to formulate a plan — and that is only the beginning!

Spanning 152 screens and 3 levels, Robot Messiah is a sensational arcade adventure, rich in atmosphere and tension which is sure to be the hit this Christmas.

AMSTRAD
SPECTRUM
£7,95

"ROBOT MESSIAH" written by Christian Urquhart and Mike Smith

Christian Urquhart is also the author of 'Hunchback' & co-author of Daley Thompson's 'Decathlon'

Alphabatim

AVAILABLE FROM LEADING SOFTWARE STOCKISTS
OR DIRECT FROM: ALPHABATIM 2 WELLINGTONIA COURT VARNDEAN PARK BRIGHTON BN1 6TD SUSSEX



LETASET MISCARRIAGE

Dear Sir,
I am incensed by the grossly unfair review of our program *Letaset* by your Sub (normal) Editor, Sean Masterson in the October issue of CRASH. No producer can expect a simpering eulogy of his work but at least fair play is required. I challenge his unbalanced comments on a number of grounds.

Firstly, he uses one whole column of precious newsprint 'griping' (to use his word) about the cassette inlay and manual not being to his liking and then he has the gall to take the words out of every bored readers mouth 'get on with it.' As an architect I feel reasonably well qualified to judge matters of design and defy CRASH to improve on the screen presentation of this utility via a compact program.

Concerning the manual, I would remind CRASH that it was specifically written on the request of your Jeremy Spencer, who received the first review copy of the program. This delayed the program's launch (last May!) by five weeks. Its contents are, I believe, simple, clear and easy to follow. The colour and scale of the manual were designed to frustrate pirating, appreciating that the text styles themselves are offered for use in commercial software unfettered.

Masterson goes on to suggest that a duff cassette was supplied and then admits he can't handle his little speccy. He blames Eclipse for not guaranteeing *Letaset* to work with some commercial software, over which (as explained in the manual) we have no control. Masterson ignores the editing potential of the Boldzx style and lifts out of context the minor item of random pattern generation by poking the CHARS address 23607 (to my knowledge, this aspect of the Spectrum receives little attention). Masterson now rambles on with his own boring philosophy to an apparent conclusion only to discover there is a textscaler program on side two, only to start his griping all over again.

Again it is apparently Eclipse's fault that any coloured artwork titled via the textscaler program, only comes out monochrome on the ZX printer. We are at least pleased that Masterson was 'amused' by the 'totally useless' dragons and damsel graphics used in the program and (subconsciously) appreciates that a lot of work goes into redefining eighteen character sets. For your edification, it amounts to 110,592 eg over 1/10 million keystrokes, assuming it goes like clockwork. But then, what would Masterson know of that or anything else?

To conclude, I enclose an unsolicited letter from a customer using *Letaset* which takes a somewhat opposite view from Masterson on our product. And as your readers may well think Masterson's scurrilous remarks apply to our *Halley's Comet* program — also reviewed in the same issue — I enclose some documentary evidence as to its pedigree.
Maurice Gavin, RIBA, FRAS (for Eclipse Software)

This looks like time for a 'from the horse's mouth' statement, so without further newsprint-wasting ado, I'll hand over to Masterson himself . . .

Despite the rather excessive amount of ad hominum Mr Gavin uses to misguidedly reinforce his complaints, I will try to reply to his criticisms in a constructive and objective manner.

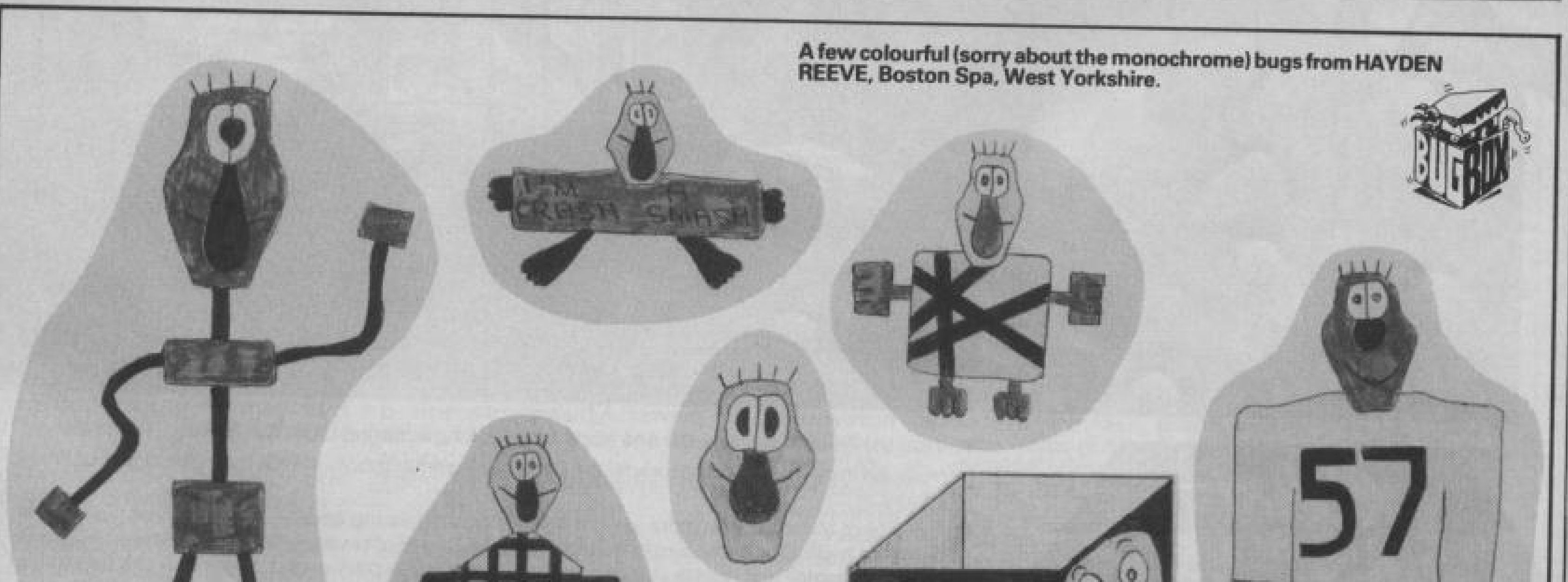
Mr Gavin suggests that I am wasting newsprint to concentrate on comments relating to the packaging of the product. Despite Mr Gavin's reluctance to see their relevance, it is quite possible that readers of CRASH may wish to know the physical state of the product before purchasing. The fact that Mr Gavin is a qualified architect bears no relevance at all. It is rather like having an author, whose book is criticised saying, 'Well as a qualified writer, I must tell you that my book is excellent.' Being 'qualified to judge' does not imply exemption to being biased. Perhaps Mr Gavin would prefer doing all his own reviews in the future.

If the manual was designed as it was to prevent pirating, then that indeed is a worthy cause. However, it is reminiscent of the old multicolour code card in JSW. *What if you are colour blind! Or in this case, why should your average user, who has paid good money, have to suffer a sloppily printed manual. I suggest that Mr Gavin drool over an Infocom release for a few hours and appreciate how they avoid piracy. My comments in the review are still valid and relevant.*

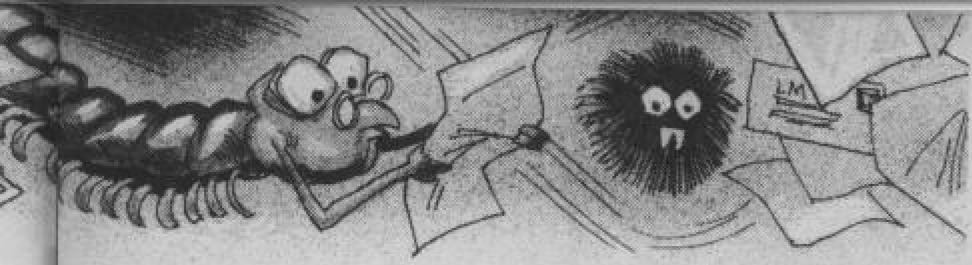
Perhaps the context was misleading, but in fact I can handle a 'little speccy' and the unfamiliarity was in respect to quirks in the power supply which led to constant problems with loading the program. This was only intended as comment not criticism. I did not, as Mr Gavin imagines, write half of the review before discovering that the program had more to offer on side two. I was writing the article from the point of view of a user of the product, first time around. The second part of the ultility is hardly heralded with trumpets and horns.

I did not blame Eclipse for anything that it had no control over, such as compatibility problems or monochrome printing. I simply stated them as facts (which they are). If not, there would always be somebody who complained that they had not been told of these details earlier. The fact that such details may seem obvious to myself and Mr Gavin, does not mean others will necessarily find them so.

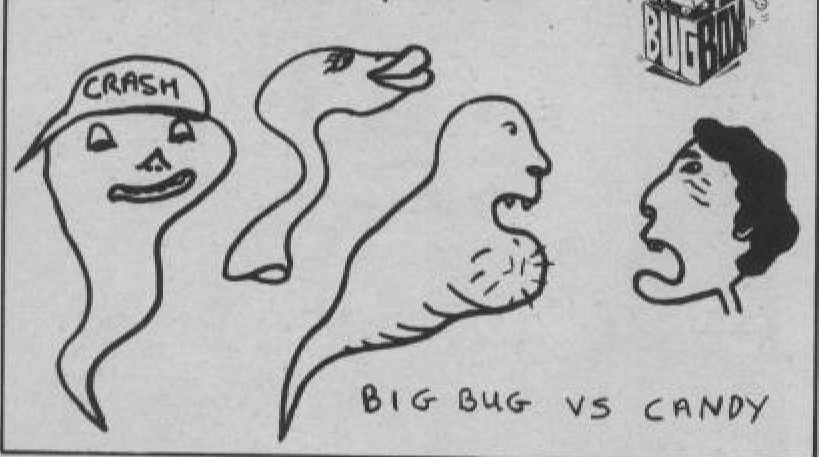
I must admit that the wild accusation that because I reviewed Letaset *one way, my remarks would apply to another product by the same company, does cause offence. As a matter of act, I am a keen amateur astronomer and having used that program, found it most satisfactory indeed. But I was not asked to review it, so I find it difficult to understand why Mr Gavin brings it into his argument. Finally, I remind Mr Gavin that my review ended with comments to the effect that his utility achieved all that any utility could hope to achieve — to do its job well. In fact, I wanted to include shots of some of the 'excellent results' achieved from a ZX printer, in the article but there wasn't room. Consequently I might suggest that his arguments are totally unbalanced and grossly unfair, rather than mine.*
Sean Masterson



A few colourful (sorry about the monochrome) bugs from HAYDEN REEVE, Boston Spa, West Yorkshire.



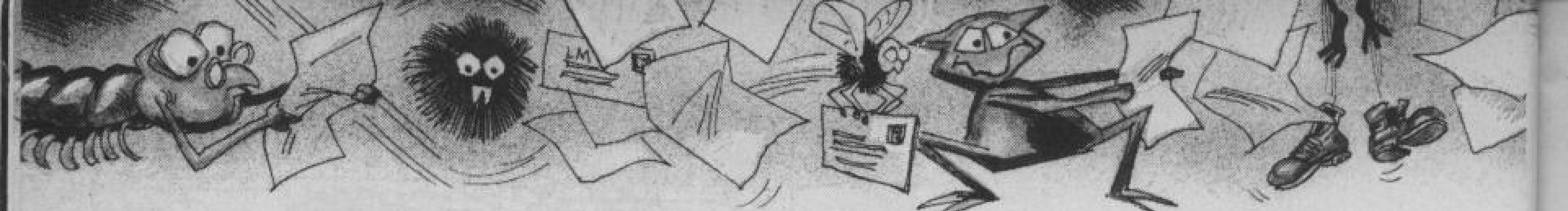
A few bugs from JOHN TILBY of Dymchurch, Kent.



TAKE A LOOK AT THE CHARTS

Dear Lloyd,
I received this month's CRASH today and while looking through the hallowed pages, I saw a letter asking for a wargames chart. This is something I would love! Anyway, while in a shop the other day, I saw ZZAP! 64, so I decided to have a look to see if it was anywhere near the quality of CRASH. The ZZAP! charts were very good. They had percentages for the top ten games, something I would like very much. So ask if the charts could be improved and have percentages.
R Brand, Sunninghill, Berks

I'll put your request to Grey Boots Kidd. I can't see much problem with adding the Overall rating given in CRASH to the chart entries, or the percentage of the vote it received. But you may be a bit surprised at how low those percentages are, because a far wider range of titles are voted for by Spectrum owners than is the case with Commodore owners.
LM



OWN UP . . .

Dear LLoyd,
How come that companies give you loads of games for prizes when they are always complaining that they are losing thousands of pounds because of piracy? Sounds a little fishy to me . . . I have a feeling that these competitions are just to make innocent people buy your mag. All you have to do is make up names and put them in the results section. None of the readers would be any the wiser. There is just one thing that would change my mind. If this letter just happened to be letter of the month and I received some software, then I might just change my mind. Come on, Mr Mangram. What have you got to say?
'Um, well,' said Mr Mongrain. See, it is true. I knew it was. Unless the software arrives through my letterbox soon, I shall expose you Mr Mongyrum, and the editor, Graemmum Kod to the press. Imagine the headlines, 'Monirum and Koid Fool Readers' or 'Prizes gone to Koid.' Your careers would be ended. I can think of one good result though; at least you would get about £27 quid a week rather than a few pence and a 10p luncheon voucher!
Yours threateningly,
Hayden Reeve, Boston Spa, W Yorks

What a great idea, I'd never thought of that. You're right, we could just make up the names and addresses, and how much easier it would be than doing all that boring copy typing from illegible envelope backs too! Of course competitions are to entice you to buy CRASH, but you're not that innocent. And we're only talking about a handful of cassettes here and there, not the thousands involved in piracy.
LM

A HANDFUL OF OPINIONS

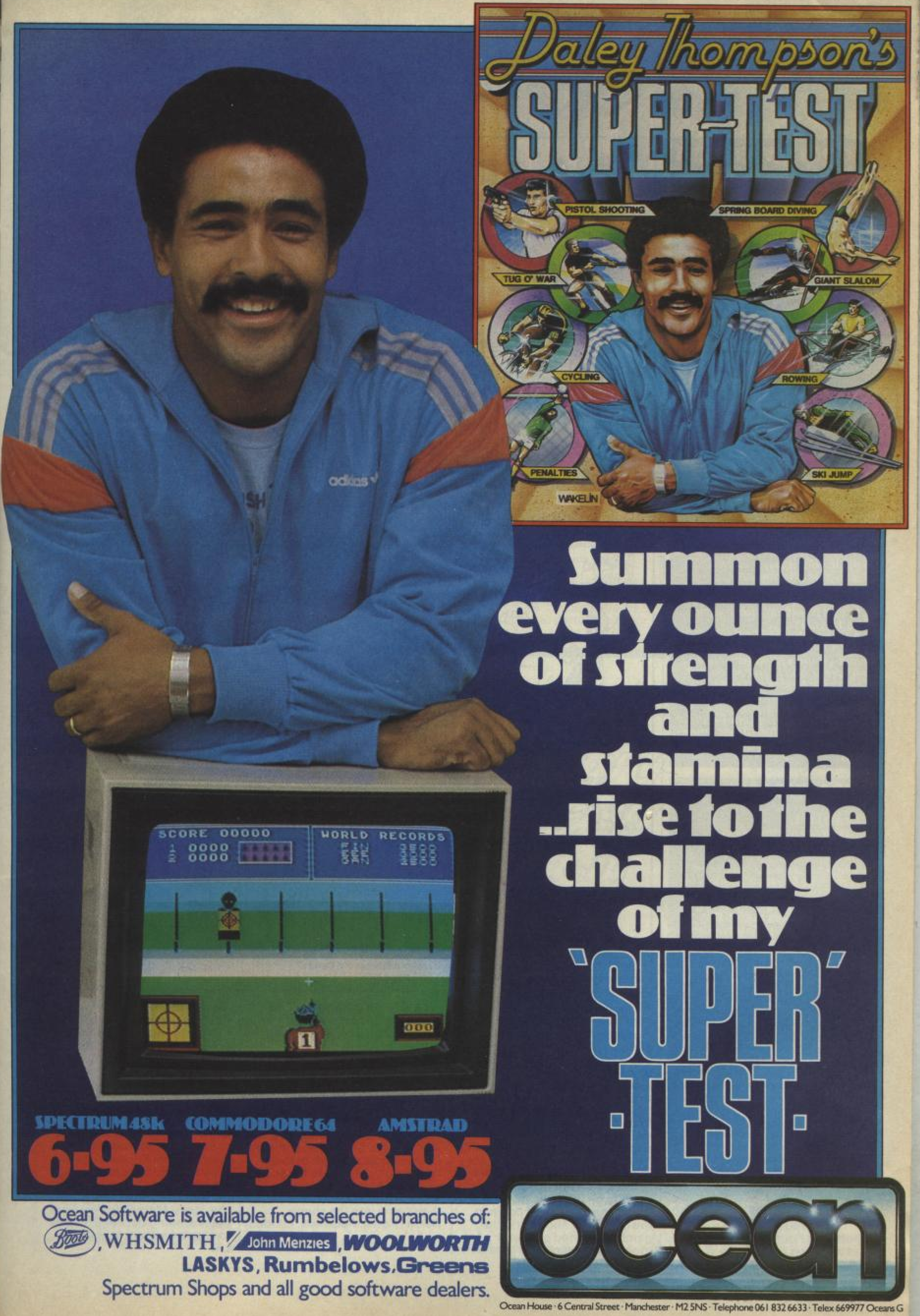
Dear Lloyd,
Due to the recent debate about software, I have written to give my views on the subject. I agree that the price of software is extortionate. I fail to see how any game, however complex or revolutionary can cost anything up to fifteen pounds. Computer users are in the main, teenagers who receive between fifty pence and a couple of pounds a week, pocket money. How can we afford to buy these games if it may take months to do so? In cases like this, pirating is unfortunately, the only answer. Personally, I would much rather have an original than a pirate but this is not always possible. For instance, if you made a resolution to buy all the CRASH smashes in the recent August issue alone, it would require nearly fifty pounds!
Now to turbo loaders. I have never had any problems with these as I cannot afford to buy many games which use these methods of loading.
Alien 8 and *Knight Lore* are, in my opinion, totally different games. How these two can be called 'rip-offs' or 'copies' just because the graphics and gameplay are similar (well, perhaps a bit more than similar) I fail to see! *Alien 8* has more features than *Knight Lore*, such as the rising blocks and magnetic effect and is much harder, I find.
David Barrett, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs

I'm not sure I agree with your comment about the 'extortionate' price of software. The sad fact is, that things cost what they cost. You're undoubtedly right, as far as you know, about how much pocket money is available to the average younger teenager, but the experience of arcade machine operators was that that very bracket was the one to pour millions and millions of pounds a year into arcade slots. Of course it's sad not be able to afford an entire month's set of CRASH Smashes, but on the other hand, would you buy all the top twenty single records a month (not quite as expensive, I know)?
LM

JUMPING ON THE BANDWAGGON

Dear CRASH,
WARNING — The End Is Nigh! What has happened to the software industry? You buy an Imagine game (which is pretty impressive considering they went bust yonks ago) and then find it is made by Ocean. Who owns who? Who goes next? Along with Imagine, a lot of small software companies have gone into liquidation (I'm going to have to buy shares in liquidation, everyone else seems to be getting into this thriving business) and are being bought up left, right and centre. But it's not just small companies that have jumped onto Imagine's bandwagon, several biggies have gone bust as well.
Have those cynics of the first computers and computer games received their long awaited wish? Will they soon be able to say, 'We told you it wouldn't last'? Who knows? But at least I do know that the Spectrum's games support will be the last to go. God save Sir Clive. Now I have had my say.
Have a nice day.
Mr A M Samier, Oxfordshire

I don't know whether people at Imagine (the original one) would have considered liquidation as a 'bandwaggon' on which to jump!
LM


Daley Thompson's
SUPER-TEST
PISTOL SHOOTING
SPRING BOARD DIVING
TUG O' WAR
GIANT SLALOM
CYCLING
ROWING
PENALTIES
SKI JUMP
WAKELIN
adidas
SCORE 00000
WORLD RECORDS
Summon every ounce of strength and stamina ..rise to the challenge of my 'SUPER' ·TEST·
SPECTRUM 48K 6·95
COMMODORE 64 7·95
AMSTRAD 8·95
Ocean Software is available from selected branches of:
Boots, WHSMITH, John Menzies, WOOLWORTH
LASKYS, Rumbelows, Greens
Spectrum Shops and all good software dealers.
ocean
Ocean House · 6 Central Street · Manchester · M2 5NS · Telephone 061 832 6633 · Telex 669977 Oceans G



I COULDN'T FIND A HOLE

Dear Lloyd,
I've finally bothered to write in to CRASH, after reading it since the second issue. Everyone keeps saying they won't go into how good CRASH is, so I will. It's the best . . . no enough of that. It's brilliant!

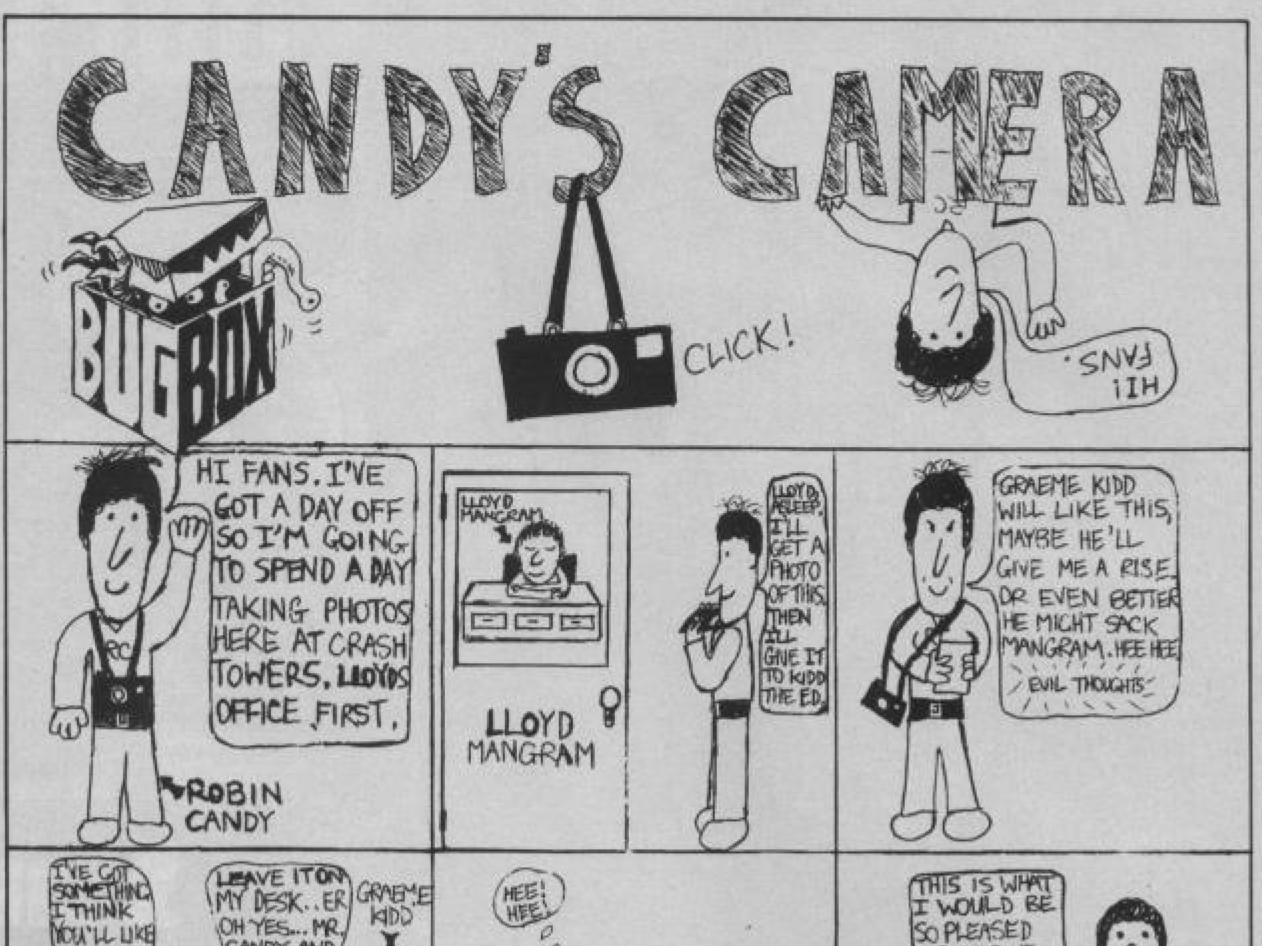
But there is a problem with the reviews. Why don't you try having different reviewers for arcade/arcade adventures, as they may be biased? Let's face it, the worst review lately has been *Nodes of Yesod*. Admit it, this is one of the most boring games ever. I started the game and didn't find a hole for twenty-five minutes, so I turned it off. I even had a witness. This game nearly overtakes *Ghostbusters* in the worst five games software. These are:—

1 *Ghostbusters*
2 *Nodes of Yesod*
3 *Gift from the Gods*
4 *Rocky Horror Show*
5 *Knight Lore*

You may think I made a mistake including *Knight Lore* in the list but it was a bit boring. I also hate pre-release advertising, such as on *Alien 8*. I start saving up for a game only to find that it isn't released for half a year!

Andrew, Wanstead, London

Everything's a matter of taste, Andrew, and I can't agree with you over Nodes of Yesod. *Almost everyone I've talked to thought it was great, and how could you roam around without finding a hole for all that time? They're everywhere!*
LM



CHRISTOPHER WALTON of Manchester reckons his candid Candy snap is accurate — but Robin also hates cameras really.

TRASHCAN

Dear Lloyd,
Last week my friend EW (short for Earwolf) was browsing through the September issue when he came across *Desert Burner* by Creative Sparks. He read the review and then commented that he would give it a Crash Trash award. EW thinks that Crash Trash awards would be a good marking system and would advise people on what not to buy.

Neo, Lisburn, N Ireland.

What's wrong with the present rating system? If a game gets a low percentage, isn't that good enough to tell readers what we think of it. Why do you want to rub it in? If, every time you made a mistake, all your friends called you trash, how would you like it? The argument in reverse, (that what's the point in that case of a CRASH Smash award?) isn't the same, for it is a pleasant task to get excited about something good and make note of it.
LM

Dear Crash,

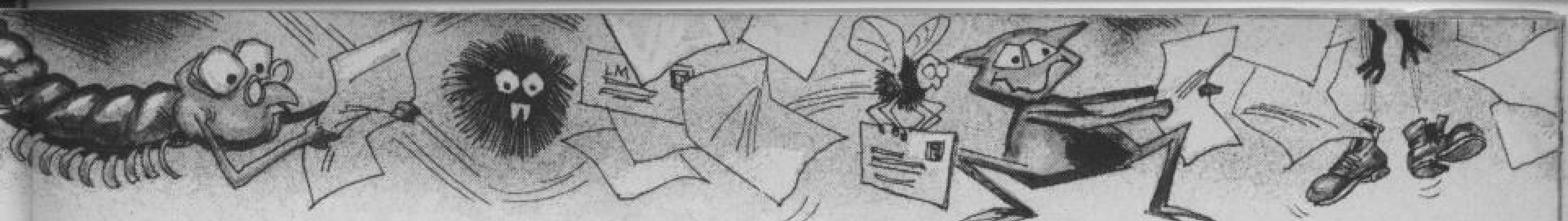
Could you please tell me why software houses have to copy each others ideas. Take Melbourne House; not long ago they released *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*. Not long after, almost all of the computer mags had a review of the game, all saying that it was excellent. So I thought it would be a good idea to buy it. After a week or so, I had come up with most of the cash. In that same week, I had bought an issue of CRASH and within its pages, I found an advertisement for System Three's new Karate game. I wanted to see a review of this game but there were none to be found in any of the magazines, so I went down to the computer shop to try the game out. I tried both and thought that each was great fun.

At home, I sat and thought about which game to buy. I eventually made up my mind but did not go to buy it for another week. On the way, I came across another magazine, flicked through its pages and finding nothing of interest, put it down again. Lo and behold, on the back cover was an advertisement for Imagine's *Yir Ar Kung-Fu*. So please, software houses, wait a month before releasing your games because we are not all rich enough to go out and buy them as soon as they come into the shops.

Denis Brown, Peckham, London

Two interesting points here. First, as I pointed out in the last Christmas Special edition of CRASH, there seems to be a 'self copy' syndrome, which basically says, 'if a game is successful — repeat it', except in computer software that means several houses are all doing it at the same time. I don't quite know why.

Secondly, System Three's International Karate *is still not available in shops (as I write), which is why you could find no reviews of it. But it appears that the canny Mark Cale may have been sending out demo copies to shops for them to display.*
LM



ART MUST WAIT ITS TURN

Dear CRASH,
I wonder if you could help me. Way back in May, I bought a copy of the *Artist* — nothing wrong with it, in fact it's mighty fine as a graphics utility and deserves good reviews, such as the one your mag gave it. Having produced a number of masterpieces (!) with it, I decided to give their colour print services a try and sent a cassette containing a screen to the address listed at the back of the manual, along with £1.50. After a couple of weeks of deafening silence, I rang Softechnics, the first of a long string of telephone calls, as you may be already anticipating.

The list of excuses I've been given for them not delivering my print would make *That's Life* run into extra time. Here's a small selection:—

1) We've had trouble getting the paper.
2) The Managing Director's ill and he's the only one who knows how to use the printer.
3) Everyone's on holiday except me.
4) The Managing Director's in America and he's got the program with him.
5) Everyone's at the PCW show.

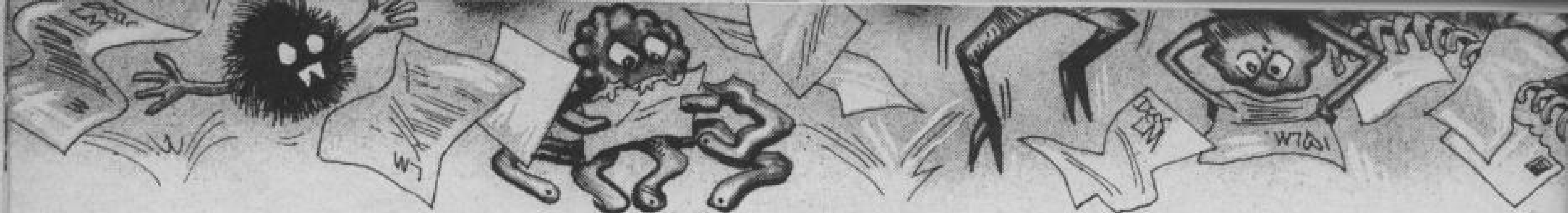
Etc, etc, etc . . .

I've tried writing to the Managing Director. I've been polite, forceful, fawning and even obnoxious in turn, but have I got my print? They won't refund my money or return my tape or even have the good grace to reply to my letters. Can you do anything — if only to ensure that others who read the reviews don't throw their money down the Softechnics drain.
Many thanks.
Larry Hall, Beighton, Sheffield

I'm quite sure that Softechnics will get down to sorting out your problem soon, Larry, and that normally they are very efficient. After all, they must be very keen to support their utility and must know that not doing the job properly, or having people on the phone with silly answers to serious enquiries, can only harm their reputation, so I'm sure it'll all be sorted out very soon.
LM



JONATHON CLIFTON from London W6 offers this cosy view of my domestic bliss.



NO TAKE OFF REQUIRED

Dear CRASH,
I feel that you should dig a little deeper into the games you review. For instance, in the game *Dam Busters*, a little more rooting around would have revealed just how inept the programming is. Did you know that the runway at Scampton (using the take-off mode) stretches all the way to the English channel and then (wonder of wonders) continues across the water and goes through France and Germany and, for that matter, goes anywhere you wish?

It's true! Simply start the plane moving in the required direction and don't take off. Of course, if you bank, to make a turn, the plane crashes, but all is not lost as, if you use the rudder then steering is no problem.

Imagine the situation at some place in Germany. There you are, zooming along at ground level with searchlight, barrage balloons and enemy planes coming towards you — from below!

Further testing will reveal that this wonderful Lancaster can actually fly at 20mph on only one engine. To prove it, when in flight, stop three engines with the fire extinguishers, then gradually reduce speed on the remaining engine. Voila!

The programmers of this pathetic, so called simulation actually portray the plane (in map mode) with only two engines. To continue this saga of inept bungling, one can 'cheat' quite easily on the final bombing of the dams. Simply get your spotlights lined up and your airspeed organised before reaching the dam. The manual suggests that this is not permissible yet using this method, I quickly zapped all three dams within an hour of first loading the program.

I could relate further examples of the shortcomings of this pitiable piece of software but will instead return to my original point that your reviewers are in the ideal position to bring to our attention, the inadequacy of programs that fail to meet the claims advertised for them.

How about another — *Boulderdash*. The scrolling routine on this program is so defective that Rockford can go off screen, get killed and his demise only realised when the cumbersome routine trundles the graphics back into view. Also, when picking up certain diamonds, the black portion of the screen display is suddenly very badly corrupted, making further progress almost impossible. These faults are still very much in evidence on the more recent *Rockford's Riot*, which you reviewed recently. However, no mention of these problems appeared anywhere in your review.

So come on you men! Shoulders to the wheel, noses to the grindstone! Boldly go where you should be going! After all, it's only a little further down the road and you would be providing your readers with a better service, and more importantly, saving them money. Who in their right mind would contemplate buying the sad and sorry *Dam Busters* after reading a review that embraced the points covered in my previous paragraphs? Step lively, lads and may the force be with you. Send me a fiver and I'll enrol you into my newly formed organisation, Campaign Rejecting Awful Programs (figure out the acronym yourselves). I have the feeling that some of you could rise to great heights in such an outfit, but perhaps more of that in another letter!

Love to you all,
Tony Melling, Hyde, Cheshire

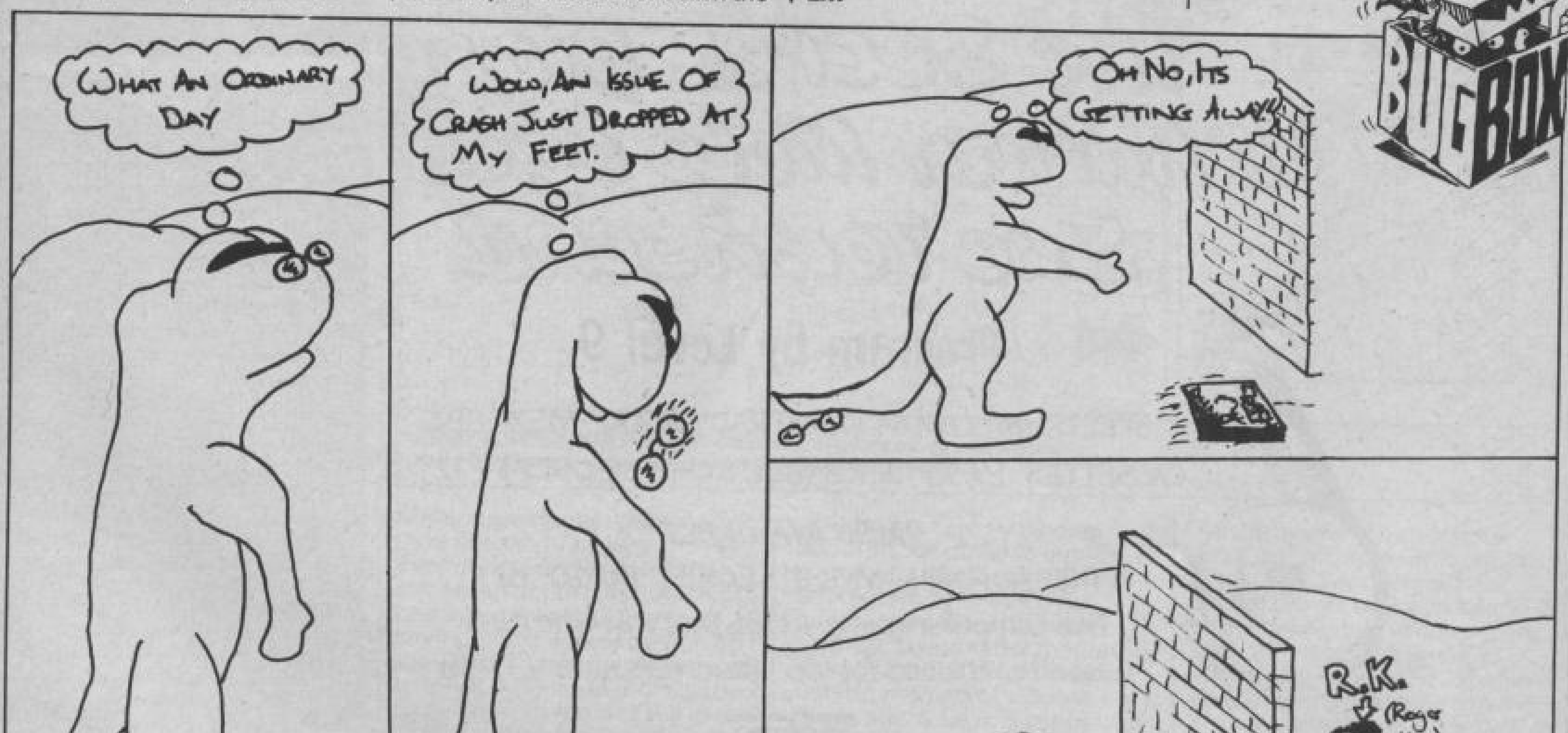
You must have got hold of the German copy of Dam Busters, *the one that was sent out to confuse the enemy. No? Okay, well we also noticed that you could bank your aircraft at about 300 feet off the ground and run the wing tip in, which makes the Lancaster the aeroplane with the biggest wing span ever. I say 'also', I suppose I have to admit, in all (ahem) honesty that no one attempted a Channel crossing without taking off, but you wouldn't would you?*

On the other hand, smarty boots Cmdr Melling, you didn't spot the other horrendous error of research from the CRASH historical archives (or is that hysterical?), but the next writer, and some others, did . . .
LM

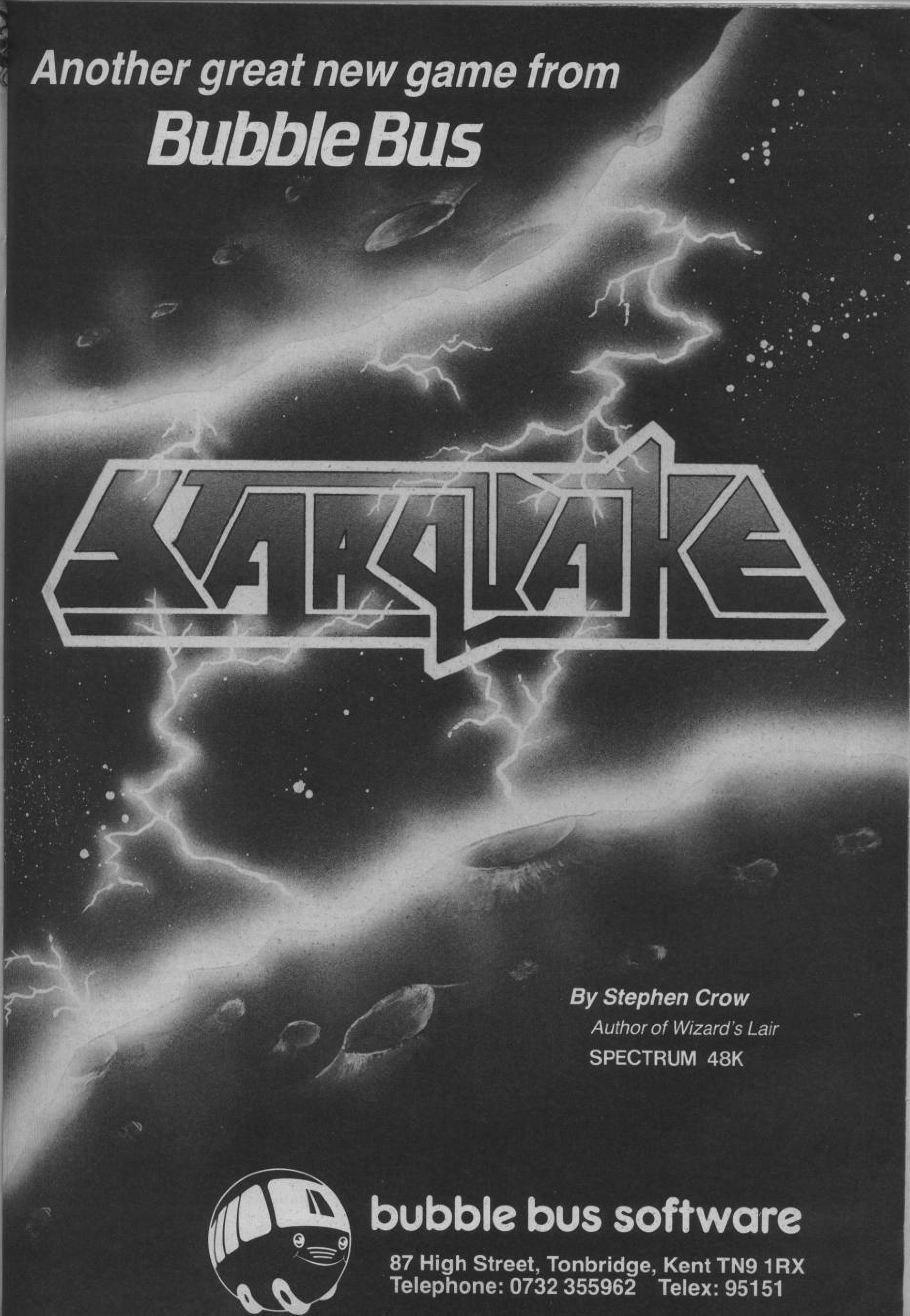
SQUADRON MIX UP

Dear Sirs,
Please, when you do your competitions, do your research properly. I'm outraged at the ignorance shown in your *Dam Busters* competition. I may not be the first to write but you called the 'Dambusters' squadron **633 Squadron**. If you had used your intelligence you would have seen that it is actually **617**, of which the fact is pointed out on the cassette cover. 633 Squadron operated Mosquitos in World War II, whilst 617 operated Lancasters. I am sure that any knowledgeable readers will be outraged and so will the present 617 Squadron who operate Tornados out of RAF Marsham. I trust you will print a full apology.
Alan Tunnicliffe (14), Bracknell, Berks

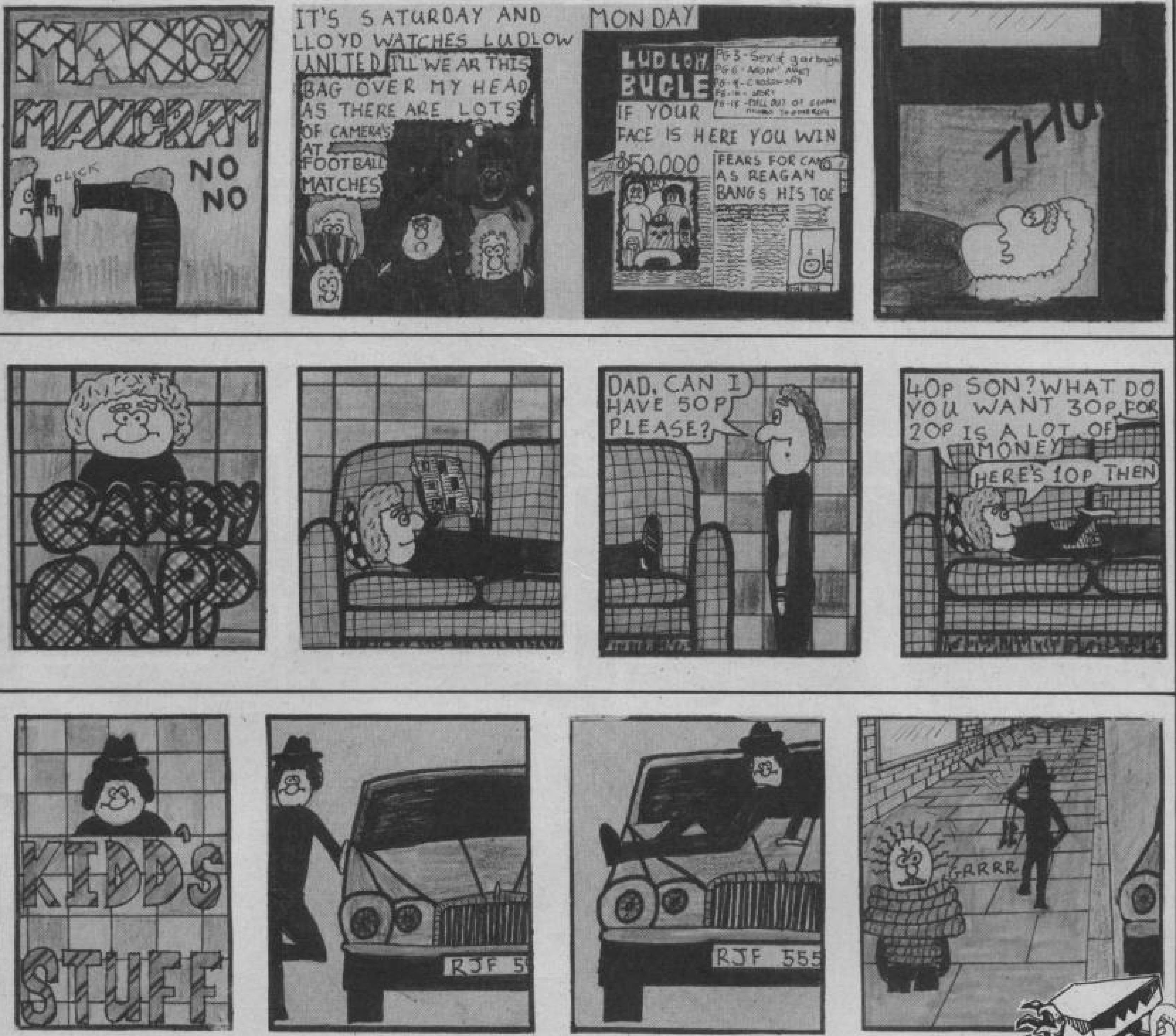
Of course you're right, Alan. But it looks as though you have made the same appalling error as our daft comps minion, which comes of seeing too many films. 633 Squadron never existed outside of celluloid, and is only known from the film of the same name, which in turn was adapted from books written by Frederick Smith. Still, two wrongs don't make a right, and everyone in the archive dept apologises profusely for what was a classic pratfall.
LM



Roger Kean gets the blame for many things including Bug teasing, as A BRADLEY from Sutton Coldfield proves . . .


Another great new game from
Bubble Bus
STARQUAKE
By Stephen Crow
Author of Wizard's Lair
SPECTRUM 48K
bubble bus software
87 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1RX
Telephone: 0732 355962 Telex: 95151





STEVEN PIGOTT from Blackpool sent in three little strips which illuminate aspects of life at CRASH Towers. I think the ideas contained in them are neat, so Steven you get this month's Bug Box prize — £12 worth of software.

HAVE A HOLIDAY

Dear Lloyd,
I've been reading CRASH since the first issue and I must say what a great mag it is too. However I've noticed weird things happening recently; editors leaving, reviewers arguing and slagging each other off and pictures of topless ladies appearing everywhere! You want to know why?

OVERWORKING!

Yes folks, it's true. The CRASH team has been working too hard (well, most of them have), resulting in the afformentioned happenings. There is however, a simple solution to all of these problems:—

A HOLIDAY!!!

For a small(ish) fee, holidays can be provided for the CRASH team. These holidays won't be that exciting but will allow the holidaying person(s) to return to their normal(?) state. Here is the brochure . . .

Angus Ryall: A nice, PEACEful break, somewhere in a real house. Washing facilities (a tank of hydrochloric acid) extra.

Derek Brewster: A Well-lit, warm, dirt free and slime free cupboard under the stairs, complete with a hook to hang his coat on.

Robin Candy: Locked in a smelly bedroom with a Spectrum and a large pile of unhackable games which you CAN'T cheat on.

Lloyd Mangram: Well, I think that you, Lloyd, should be made to suffer for all of the smarmy answers that you've given to people's letters and for the way that you have mutilated people appearing in the Hall of Slime. I reckon you should stay somewhere really nasty, like Madonna's armpit (an undesirable place to be by any person's standards).

Oliver Frey: Somewhere where people wear clothing all of the time (such as central Siberia).

While you lot are away, my friends and I (grammar!) will take control of the magazine, which should increase sales by a few hundred thousand but which could also result in a large number of libel cases.

Phil Bannister, South Norwood

SMARMY ANSWERS!! Me!? As everyone knows only too well, I am probably the very nicest letter answerer in the world. Most of my replies are models of cogent (look it up) thought, usually accompanied by well reasoned and well balanced argument. However, there are a lot of people round here who would agree with your main premise — that we all could do with a long holiday, though your choice of sunspots is not considered the least bit amusing. (I've just looked SMARM up in the dictionary — not mine, the word hasn't enough letters in it to be included — and it says 'smooth; approach ingratiatingly; fawn' and for SMARMY it says 'fulsome' . . .
LM



We Make 'em Good . . .

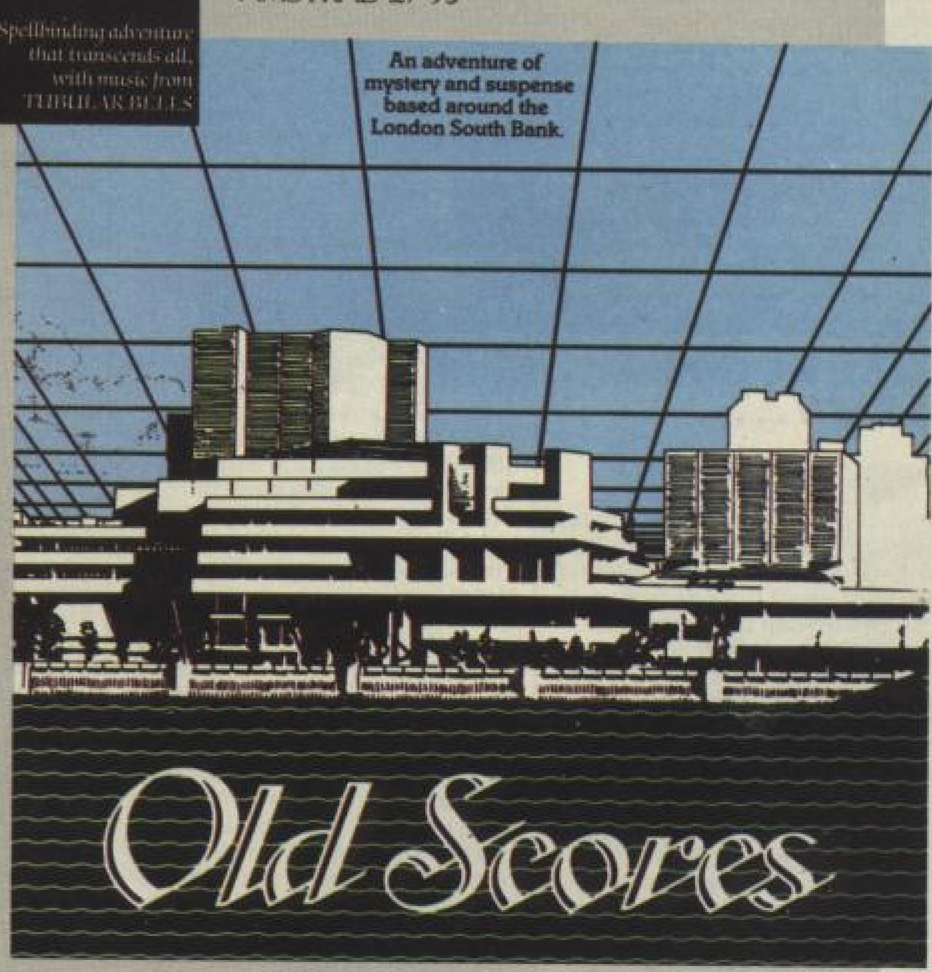


Here's a couple of challenging new games to lock your brain cells into over-drive.

First, there's Magician's Ball. Enigmatic, enchanting and totally captivating, it's a weird and wonderful adventure story set to the haunting music of Tubular Bells.

Sheer magic. With graphics to match.

SPECTRUM £6·95 COMMODORE £7·95
AMSTRAD £7·95

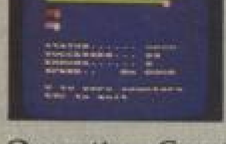


Then you can settle Old Scores. Cryptic from the start, Old Scores is a mystery to everyone. Even I haven't got a clue what it's about. So it sounds as if you'll have to play it by ear.

When that little lot's got your brain in a flat spin and your knickers in a twist, you'd better get yourself straightened out...

SPECTRUM £6·95 COMMODORE £7·95
AMSTRAD £7·95

. . . & We Make 'em Better



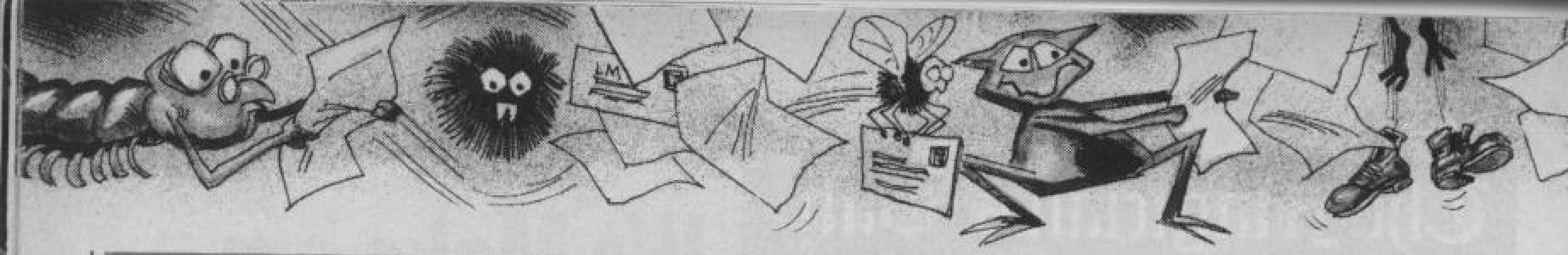


Operation Caretaker is a computer care kit complete with a cleaning tape and built-in demagnetiser, a tape to check azimuth alignment and a specially designed screwdriver to adjust the head alignment. And all instructions are displayed clearly on screen.

Now, isn't that better?

SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD,
COMMODORE £9·95
BBC/ELECTRON £10·95

I'd like to get the right games AND get my games right.
Please rush me..copies of
OPERATION CARETAKER ☐ THE MAGICIAN'S BALL ☐
OLD SCORES ☐ (Tick appropriate boxes)
for my ....computer
I enclose a cheque/PO for .... or
Access/Barclaycard No..
(includes p&p)
NAME...
ADDRESS ....
....
....Delivery within 14 days
SEND TO GLOBAL SOFTWARE,
PO BOX 67, LONDON SW11 1BS
or phone us on 01-228 1360 (24 hr)



LEAVE IT A FEW MONTHS

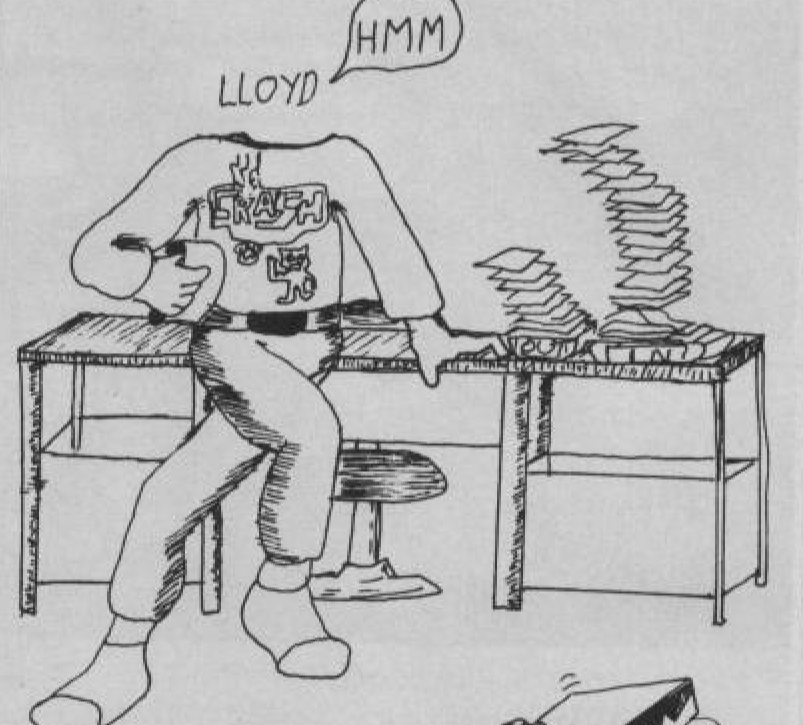
Dear CRASH,
I feel I must write this letter. When I read Jeremy Connor's letter (CRASH July), I did feel that he was being very childish and pathetic but why did you have to be so harsh on him? Almost every letter, last month, concerned the poor old bloke. I get the feeling that he won't be buying CRASH anymore.

About the cover of the July issue, personally I thought it was very good, quite artistic. But you must take into account that you do get some young readers. If you continue to print pictures like this, your mag will end up away from the computer section (you know where).

Finally, about Robin Candy. I am inclined to agree with those readers who claim he gives too many games away. Having bought *System 15000* a few months ago, I found it pretty hard but whenever I solved a problem myself, I felt great. As I was reading through the August issue, I couldn't help noticing a tip for completing the game mentioned, so I eagerly loaded it up and entered Robin's tip. Sure enough, I completed the game but felt no satisfaction afterwards. Please wait a few months before you print tips on any new games. I'm sure the software houses don't like it either.
David Salter, Nottingham

I'm sure Jeremy Connor was very well meaning when he wrote his piece about the dangers we were running by using Oliver Frey as an artist! As to the playing tips – you've damned yourself out of your own mouth! Fancy being dumb enough to go and try out a tip when you knew it might ruin your enjoyment of the game! Besides which, in almost all cases (except where the software house concerned has had an opinion on the matter) the tips are usually printed a couple of months after the release of a game, and where they are earlier than that, it is because they are part tips intended to help people who might otherwise give up altogether. I repeat again (yawn, yawn) – if you don't want to spoil a game's pleasure, don't read the tips section. Like it or not, the results of our questionnaire showed without doubt that Robin's tips are popular.
LM

Unfortunately there isn't room for ANDREW POMIANOWSKI's cartoon strip LLOYDMAN, but I thought I'd put in his portrait of me. . . ?



HERE WE GO AGAIN . . .

Dear Lloyd,
I, dear CRASHites, am Mark Jagasia, full time thirteen year-old, full time school boy (ugh!) and full time Spectrum owner. I am also a part time detective. I can call myself this because, dear readers, I HAVE PENETRATED CRASH TOWERS and come out sane (well, sort of)! And I HAVE (nearly) UNMASKED LLOYD MANGRAM (gasp; astonished and admiring noises from off stage). Here is the full story of my exclusive.

It was a normal sort of July day and I was sitting inside because there was a thunder storm outside. Combing through the pages of CRASH with my roving eye (can't afford a comb), when I came across the Forum. As I am a very observant, generally amazing and very modest kind of guy, I noticed that nobody outside CRASH Towers (ie no normal person) knew who this Lloyd Mangram person was or what he looked like. So I decided to take on the Herculean (LM's LW Dictionary) task of finding out. After doing my piano practice and other similar things sixteen times a day, my mum and dad said they would take me to Ludlow (105 miles away from Bolton) and the adventure had begun . . .

After three hours, the car pulled up outside the Medieval walled town of Ludlow and I set out on my (reasonably) heroic mission (Dam Busters music in the background) into the unknown. Jumping over Yankee tourists in C5s and other such things, I found myself outside a shifty looking wine shop in an alleyway called King Street. Opening my trusty copy of CRASH, it read '1/2 King St' — aha! The entrance to this pit of iniquity was down another side street.

I rang the broken doorbell (I realised it was broken only when I rang it) and tried to open the door (which turned out to be locked). I hung around and eventually a CRASH minion (or perhaps a friend of one) arrived. She rang the doorbell and and tried the door to no avail. I told her my story and she listened normally (ignoring me as most people do) until I mentioned the name 'Mangram.' Then she went deathly pale and ran off, down the alley. I had no time to ponder this rather extraordinary behaviour as the moment I mentioned Lloyd's name, there was the sound of someone jumping from a third story window and I spotted a dark shape waddling away down the alley. Could this be the first public sighting of the elusive Lloyd? I returned three hours later, after looking around the town and, praise the great Clive in the sky, the door was unlocked!

With great trepidation, I pushed it open, stepped inside and the door slammed shut behind me (no doubt giving the woodworm a great shock) and I was inside CRASH Towers (sinister music). I was in a dark, dingy hall (what poetry, eh?) littered with crates. There were five flights of stairs going up into darker darkness? I took a deep breath, choking at all the dust, and started to climb.

On the first floor there were two doors, one to the North and the other, East. As there was no Derek Brewster to ask, I took the East door first. As this was in darkness, I returned to the one facing North. On entering, my knees turned to pigmy artichokes as I was confronted by what looked like a six foot cabbage patch doll with a fag in its mouth. It was Jeremy Spencer! When questioned, I told my story and Jeremy let me in. I had reached the heart of CRASH – JS's desk! Despite appearances, he was quite normal and introduced me to Robin Candy (who, contrary to all the reports was very nice).

They showed me the offices with all the mags, fags and hardware littering the floor but it seemed that Lloyd had escaped again. They showed me his cage, littered with brilliant Design Design games and his computer. Being brilliantly observant, I noticed the cigarettes in his ashtray nearly touched the ceiling and before I left; Lloyd is about 35 and Welsh (well, with a name like Lloyd, he couldn't be much else). Candy is a snazzy dresser so it's safe to assume that Lloyd is a Welsh dresser.

So, dear readers, keep your eyes open for a 35 year old, chain smoking, Welsh dresser. But don't worry, Lloyd, one day I'll return to unmask you!
Mark Jagasia, Bolton, Greater Manchester

PS Graeme Kidd is bald.

Working backwards, Graeme Kidd was bald, having shaved off every hair on his head, but now he resembles Dracula as it grows back. Candy certainly is a snazzy dresser, but he's not as trendy as Ben Stone (an ex-Big City Slicker you see, whereas Robin's only a local yokel). Since your visit, everyone's given up smoking — well almost, but the 'crates' (actually boxes full of Jiffy bags) are still littering the lower corridor. I've no idea who the person could be that ran away from the door, and I'm sure our good friend in the Victoria wineshop below would be very upset to hear you refer to his noble establishment as 'shifty'. As to where I was that day (don't worry, everyone told me about your visit)? I was some forty miles away, shopping in Telford.
LM

Time to go, now, the dawn is breaking over the battlements of Ludlow Castle, and the early birds are twittering. You're convinced, yes? No, okay, so it's opening time at the Slaughtered Lamb. Sorry, yet again, to the thousands who didn't get their missives printed, but don't be disheartened, at least I've managed to stop Robin running off with my mail in search of the lost POKE. The address to write to is: CRASH FORUM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.

NEW RELEASES

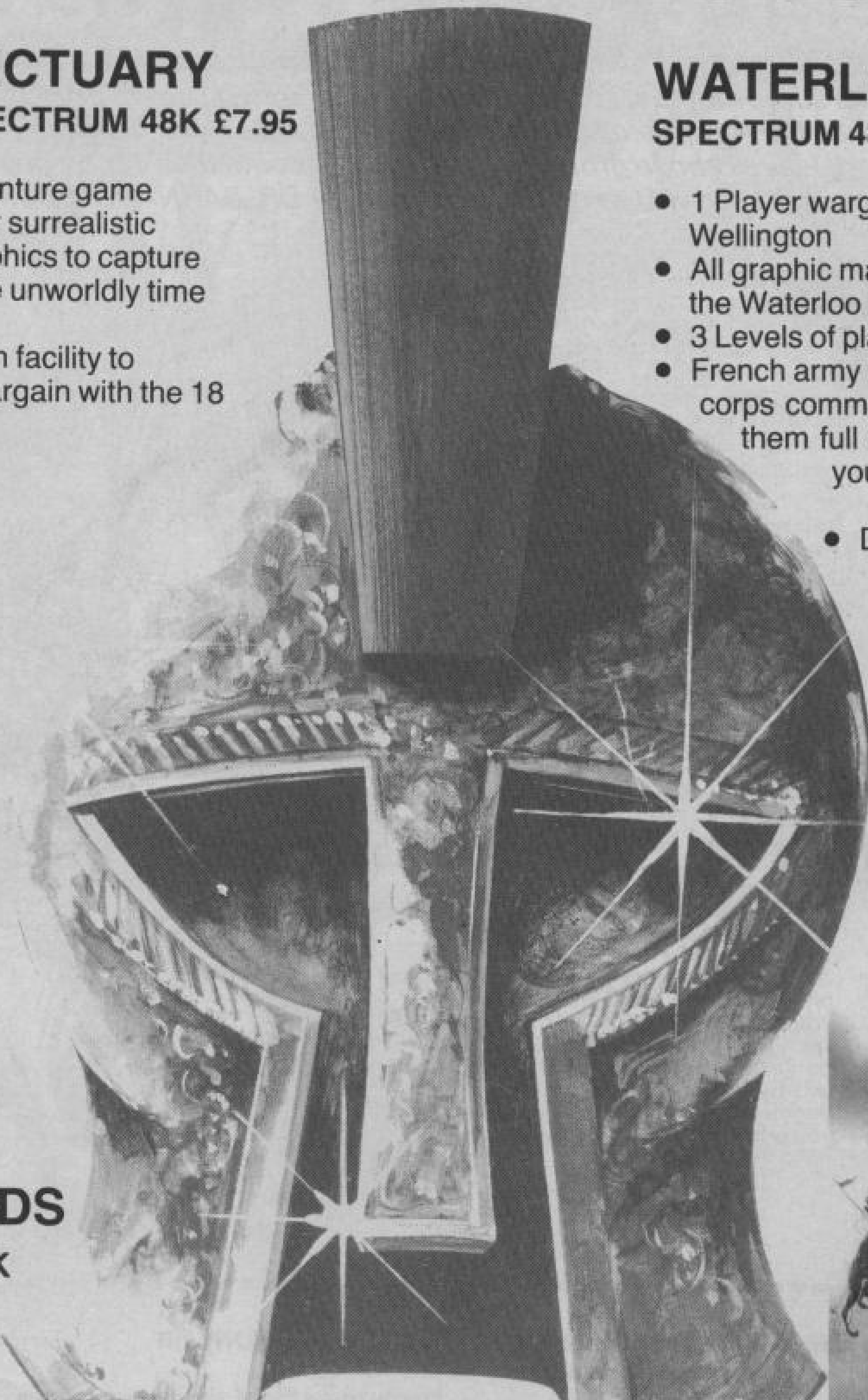
TIME SANCTUARY

SPECTRUM 48K £7.95

- Futuristic Adventure game
- Fast, full colour surrealistic landscape graphics to capture the mood of the unworldly time sanctuary
- Communication facility to address and bargain with the 18 characters
- Exploration of map, houses and maze

The Challenge

- locate the 6 crystals to power your time machine
- Make enough money by trading with the natives to buy the crystals
- Find the time machine before your presence in the sanctuary becomes unstable.



WATERLOO

SPECTRUM 48K £9.95

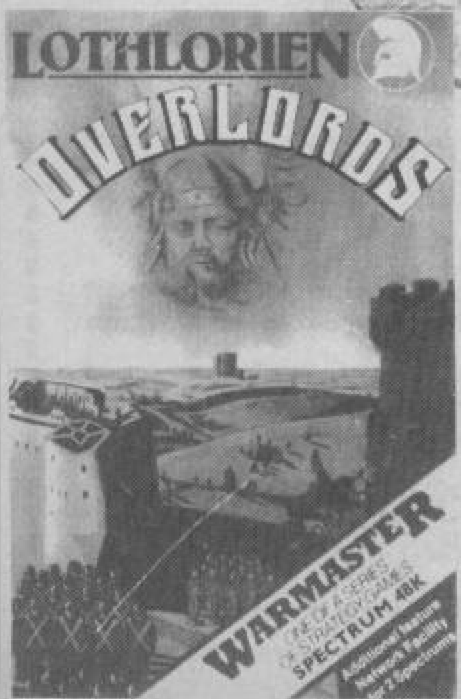
- 1 Player wargame against Wellington
- All graphic map representation of the Waterloo Battlefield
- 3 Levels of play
- French army has "intelligent" corps commanders — you can give them full command of a corps or you can give corps or unit orders
- Detailed Booklet
- Full details of terrain feature and realistic strongpoints

LOOK OUT FOR AUSTERLITZ
launch date Nov 1985



OVERLORDS

SPECTRUM 48K
£6.95



- 2 PLAYER STRAGEGY GAME
- "truly simultanous movement on both sides" *Sinclair User*
- 5 STAR REVIEW *Sinclair User*
- MICRODRIVE COMPATIBLE
- Optional network facility between 2 Spectrums with ZX interface
- Variable Game Duration option

LOTHLORIEN

Send to: M C Lothlorien Ltd, 56a Park Lane, Poynton, Cheshire SK12 1RE Tel: Poynton (0625) 876642

NAME.................................... Computer..............................

ADDRESS..

....

.................................Post Code..

Please send me:

WATERLOO — SPECTURM	£9.95	☐
TIME SANCTUARY — SPECTRUM	£7.95	☐
OVERLORDS — SPECTRUM	£6.95	☐
DETAILS OF WAR MASTER CLUB		☐

I enclose cheque/P Order for £..............................

Debit Access/Barclaycard A/c No...............................

Payable to M C Lothlorien Ltd., 56a Park Lane, Poynton, Cheshire SK12 1RE



WEEeeeee SPLAT! (gently)

Yes it's true. The event that some members of the publishing and software industry have been waiting for. . . . In the Spring of 1986 the Newsfield Nutters are going to take a flying leap. Just as the spring flower poke their first wary leaves above ground, Newsfield will come thundering down upon them. But it's all in a Good Cause, because we want to raise money for DR. BARNARDO'S and THE ACTION GROUP.



AS IF LIFE in the Tower wasn't exciting enough the CRASH **Soft in the ED**, Jeremy Spencer, suggested that we all jump out of an aeroplane. Well, we all thought he was just being terribly rude, but the next thing we knew he was ringing up all sorts of organisations and even booking a Hercules with the Red Devils.

Franco Frey, being the nearest thing that we have to Action Man, expressed his delight at the idea. When we noticed him practising landings — jumping off every five foot wall he chanced upon — we realised it was time for some concerted action to stop this lunacy.

Unfortunately, we were too late by this stage. Not only had the pro-jump ranks swelled with the addition of Oli, but ED had even dreamed up a good reason why we had to do it. What decent sort of person could refuse an opportunity to raise money for charity? Even if it does mean throwing oneself out of a dowdy Hercules flying an as yet unknown number of feet off the ground, and descending courtesy of an overgrown table-cloth?

The plan has now evolved fully. It seems that we are all going to put ourselves at your mercy: **you** will decide which six of us from the Towers are to perform this dreadful deed (well if you think it's so easy leaping from an aeroplane, why not go and try it for yourself! I mean when I joined this organisation I thought it was to write a about computer software . . .)

The whole plan is so simple even you can't back out, dear reader. Fill in the form below, naming your victim, yourself and filling in your address. You can have as many votes as you like but the cost of EACH vote is £1.00. All of the money that you send will be donated to **Dr Barnardo's** and **The Action Group**. Both charities are heavily into providing electronic aids for the handicapped. The Action Group also asked us to appeal for any unused computers, sick or fit, because they can put them to good use. We will tell you exactly how your money is going to be used in future issues.

Just to make things a bit more interesting, we are asking the software industry to donate lots of prizes for you to win. Answer the questions below and complete the tiebreaking phrase and you could be a winner. We don't know how many prizes there will be yet, but rest assured, there will be lots of lovely winnable thingies. Fret not, we will keep you posted in the issues leading up to the jump.

I want . . . . to jump out of a very high flying Hercules (He or she may use a parachute at his or her discretion)

I enclose a donation of £ . . . . (minimum of £1.00) and no coins, please. We get charged for receiving them.

I am frequently known as . . . .

and can be reached at . . . .

. . . .

. . . .

SEND YOUR VOTES AND LOOT (NO COINS!) to:

WEEeeeee SPLAT! PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

THE COMPETITIONY BIT

Name three flight simulation games

(1) . . . .

(2) . . . .

(3) . . . .

In fifteen words or less, using your skill, judgement and a pen complete the phrase below in the most apt and original way . . . .

I WANT LLOYD MANGRAM TO JUMP BECAUSE

. . . .

TOP PRESS! Oli offers original cover painting as a prize for the voters in the Loony Leap Charity Competition!



FISTRAL SURF MASTER
THE MOST REALISTIC SPORTS SIMULATION EVER!

THIS IS SURFING!

THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT YET IN HOME COMPUTING

NO JOYSTICK NEEDED!

★ NEW KEY 'SURF-BOARD' CONCEPT — JUST PLACE IT OVER YOUR SPECTRUM KEYBOARD TO CONTROL THE SURFER AS YOU WOULD CONTROL A SURF-BOARD YOURSELF!

AVAILABLE FROM:
NEW CONCEPTS, 37 DUBLIN STREET, CARLOW, EIRE

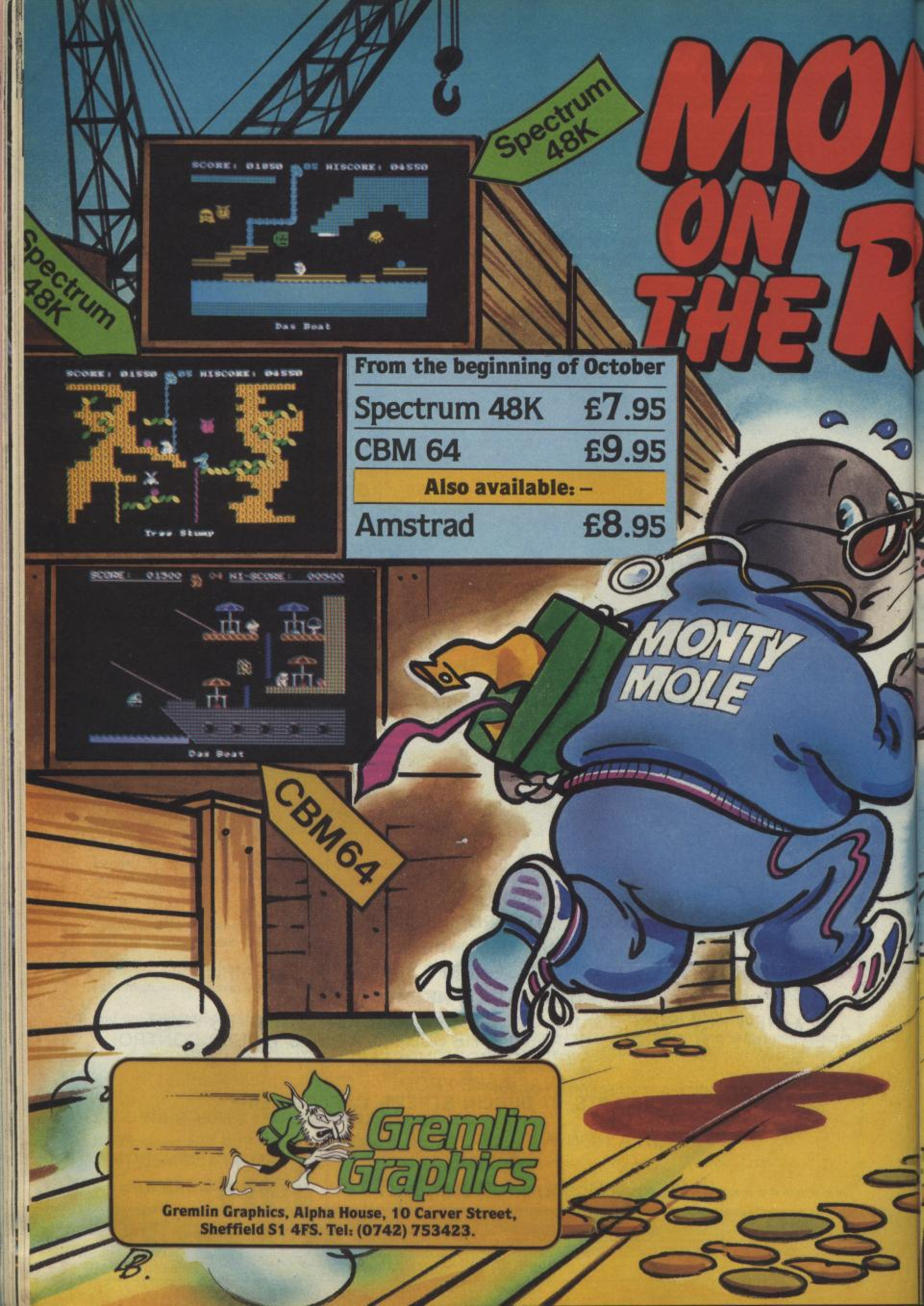
FOR A NEW WAY OF GAMES PLAYING . . .

£11·95

Is Your Spectrum Waterproof?

New Concepts

Order:

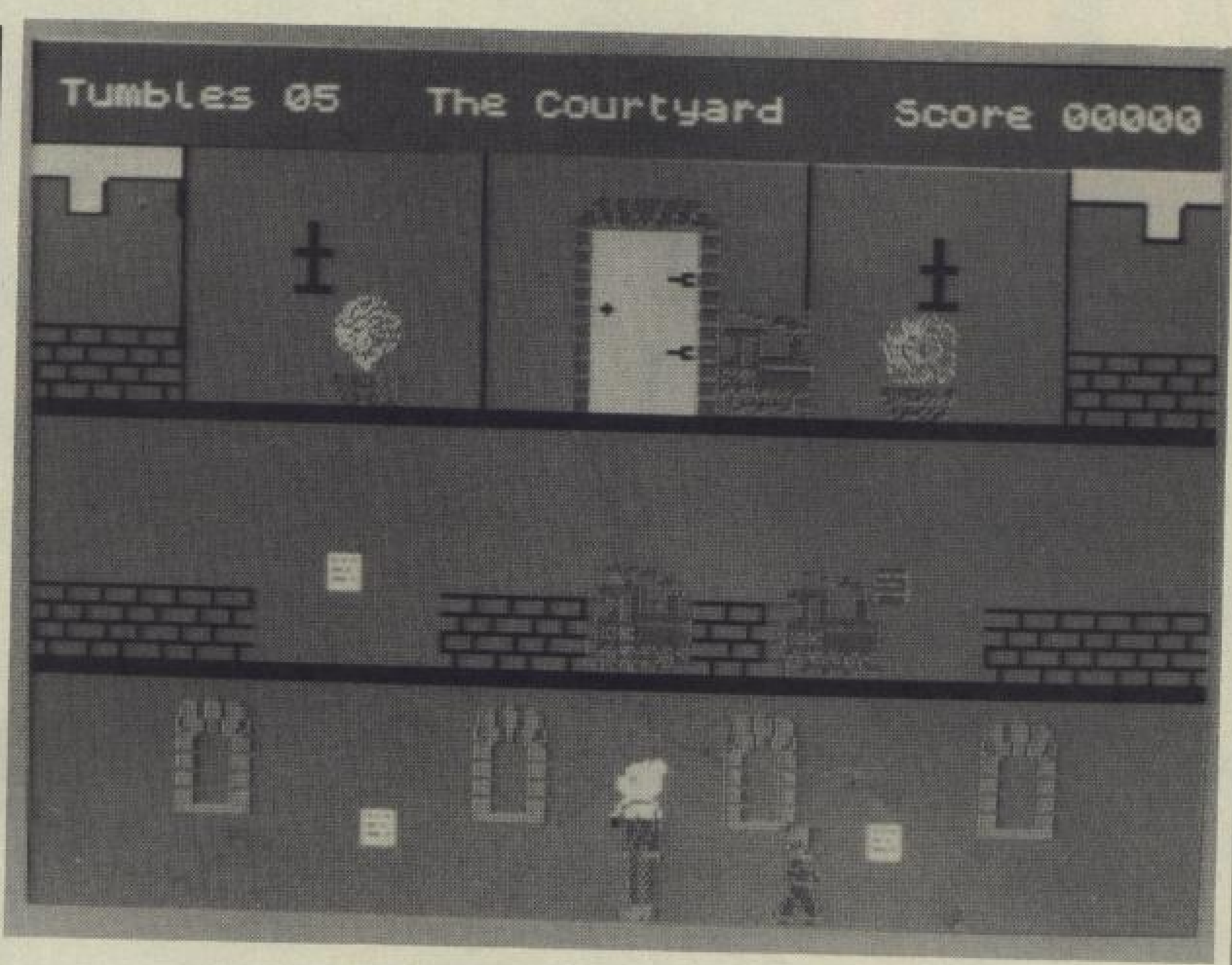


MO
ON
THE
Spectrum 48K
Spectrum 48K
SCORE: 01850 05 HISCORE: 04550
Das Boat
SCORE: 01550 05 HISCORE: 04550
Tree Stump
SCORE: 01500 04 HI-SCORE: 00500
Das Boat
From the beginning of October
Spectrum 48K £7.95
CBM 64 £9.95
Also available: –
Amstrad £8.95
MONTY MOLE
CBM64
Gremlin Graphics
Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street,
Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: (0742) 753423.


NTY
RUN
CBM64
Tree Stump
Spectrum 48K
SCORE: 00500 05 HISCORE: 04550
Escape Tunnel
SCORE: 00950 03 HI-SCORE: 00500
CBM64
Sewerage Works
Spectrum 48K
SCORE: 08250 05 HISCORE: 04550
The House
SEALINK
SCORE: 00250 04 HI-SCORE: 00500
The Hall Of Jow-an
SCORE: 01900 03 HI-SCORE: 00500
Drive Sir Clive's C5
CBM6
CBM6
Super fit and desperate for freedom, Monty makes his daring escape from Scudmore Prison. Hounded by the bastions of law and order, our frightened hero finds refuge with the criminal underworld who offer him his chance to breathe fresh air and bask in the sunlight once again. Moving from safe house to hideout to underground lair, Monty must select the correct five elements of his freedom kit from the many he's offered and not miss out on the hidden gold coins that will make him a mole of leisure.
At last he's free but can he make the cross-channel ferry on time?

RUPERT and the TOY MAKER'S PARTY

Producer: Quicksilva
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author:



This is the story of Rupert, an international star of stage, screen and newspaper page. Now in his sixty fifth year, when most other folk are thinking of retiring, Rupert appears in a computer game courtesy of Quicksilva. One of the world's most distinguished bears is brought to your Spectrum's screen, in *Rupert and the Toymaker's Party*.

Rupert, ever the helpful soul, has been assisting his father with some chores and as a result is now late for the big party being held by the Toymaker in his castle. Rupert's pals have left behind a trail of invites pinned to the castle walls for Rupert to follow, and he must collect them all up on his way.

Eager for his ice cream, jelly and lashings of ginger beer, Rupert must follow the trail through eight different areas of the castle on his way to the party room. Each part of the castle is represented by four linked screens, with invitations on different levels and Rupert must clear all four screens before he can go on with his journey.

All manner of toys are wandering loose in the castle — trains, soldiers and aeroplanes to name a few — and while most of them give Rupert a tough time on contact, causing him to take a tumble, others are helpful. Rupert can jump over toys to avoid them, but there is only so much a bear can take: Rupert's pain threshold is reached once he's had five tumbles. When Rupert's surpassed his pain barrier he trots back to the cottage in a bit of a sulk and the game's over.

The menu screen at the start of the game allows you to choose between three entry points to the game, so Rupert can take a different route to the castle for variety. Once the choice of start location has been made, the screen displays the first sheet with a helpful little rhyme at the top. Pressing the pause key starts the game proper, and the poetry disappears to be replaced with a status line, indicating the player's score and the number of tumbles left before Rupert will walk off, stage left, in a huff.

If you manage to jump Rupert round the platforms and collect up all the invites, he gets to join his friends at the party and you will be treated to a reward screen showing the chums having fun.

CRITICISM

● **'On the Commodore, Rupert is a very pretty game which is amusing if not exactly nerve-wracking or exciting to play. Sadly, in translating it to the Spectrum, most of the graphical charm has been lost. This leaves a very ordinary platform game behind — which might be fun for younger game players and avid Rupert fans, but it had no real appeal for me. The game format is nothing new or exciting — another tie-in to a character that's more front than game.'**

● *'There's not much of a game to play here —* Rupert *is little more than a simple platform variant. This isn't a graphically appealling game, sound is sparse and unimaginative and the gameplay is just as weak, making it very monotonous to play. It's very difficult to jump up steps at times, since Rupert can't move small enough distances — for each keypress he takes quite a considerable stride, making life tough for pixel perfect jumps and the game incredibly frustrating to play. My conclusions?* Rupert and the Toymaker's Party *is nothing more than an average platform game and there are far better of the genre available.'*

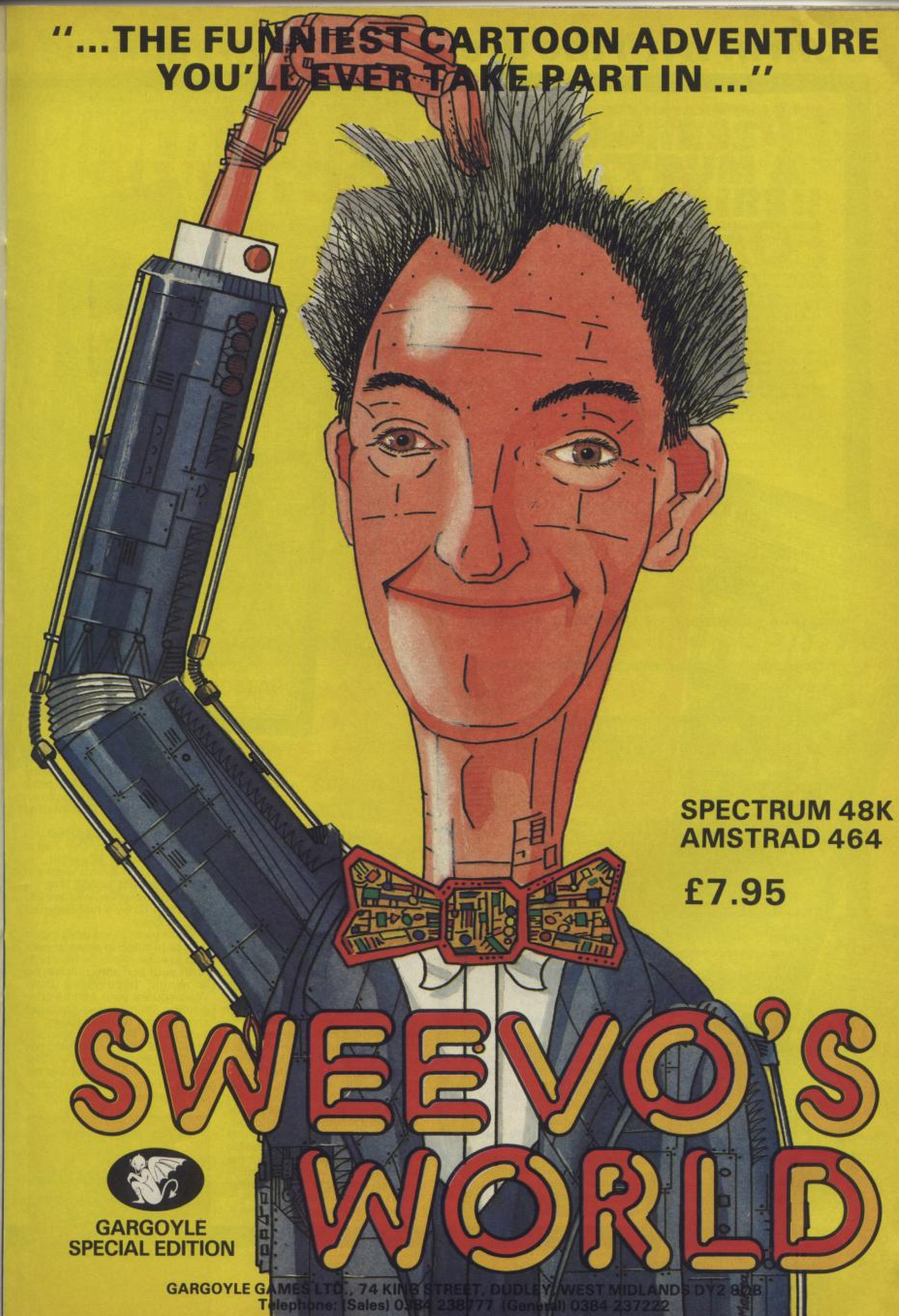
● The graphics which are rather plain and dull, with lots of attribute problems. Playability-wise *Rupert* is a fun game to play at first, but within a couple of goes I had lost interest. Overall it is an average game that may appeal to ardent fans of Rupert paraphenalia, but is nothing stunning in its own right. Not one of 'The most powerful games in the universe' whatever Quicksilva might have you believe'



COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, bottom row to jump
Joystick: Kempston or Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: not wonderfully done, lots of attribute problems
Graphics: adequate, rather than inspired
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 32
General rating: an average game

Use of computer:	**68%**
Graphics	**55%**
Playability	**58%**
Getting started	**66%**
Addictive qualities	**52%**
Value for money	**48%**
Overall	**54%**


"...THE FUNNIEST CARTOON ADVENTURE YOU'LL EVER TAKE PART IN ..."
SPECTRUM 48K
AMSTRAD 464
£7.95
SWEEVO'S WORLD
GARGOYLE SPECIAL EDITION
GARGOYLE GAMES LTD., 74 KING STREET, DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS DY2 8QB
Telephone: (Sales) 0384 238777 (General) 0384 237222

Join in with the great Ocean giveaway!

FIFTY COPIES OF AN ATHLETIC OCTET UP FOR GRABS





Crash Competition

We really ought to get together a *Newsfield Supertest* you know. I mean, all this silly running around, or paddling canoes or putting shots in places they don't particularly want to be put is all very well. But it's hardly relevant to daily life in CRASH Towers, is it?

If it was up to the Non Sweaty Dept, such games as *Daley Thompson's Supertest* would be right out of the window — too much like exercise, you see, all that joystick waggling.

No, what's really needed is a proper *Ludlow Challenge* in which you have to get into the office in the morning, avoiding double parked tourists, loonies driving up wrong way streets in the one way and the like. If you arrive alive, part two should swing into action: *The Magazine Lift*, where you have to form part of a chain gang of minions passing the latest 47,000,000 copies of **CRASH**, **ZZAP!** or **AMTIX!** up the winding stairways of the Towers so's the Mail Order can place them in individual plastic wrappers for your consumption.

Then, if you qualify, part three should be the *Morning Coffee Brew*, where you have to put the kettle on, tear round the office looking for dirty cups, gather them up, and wash them all in the sink before the kettle boils.

Part four, the *Minion Challenge*, would involve hiding away for as much of the morning as possible without being spotted and getting lumbered for some work . . . .. and that'd do for day one.

Maybe one day, we'll ask you for suggestions for Day Two of the Newsfield Supertest, to make up eight events worthy of true Supertest status. For the moment, however, we have fifty copies of Daley's real Supertest to give away.

Don't panic — we don't expect you to indulge in physical exertion to enter — all you have to do is lift your pen and complete the cunningly hand-crafted Daley Wordsquare your faithful competition minion has arranged shall appear on these pages.

As usual, first fifty correct solutions out of the cardboard box on Judgement day — 21st November — get a copy of the game, kindly donated by Ocean. Get those entries in!

SUPERTEST TEST
CRASH MAGAZINE
PO Box 10, Ludlow
Shropshire
SY8 1DB

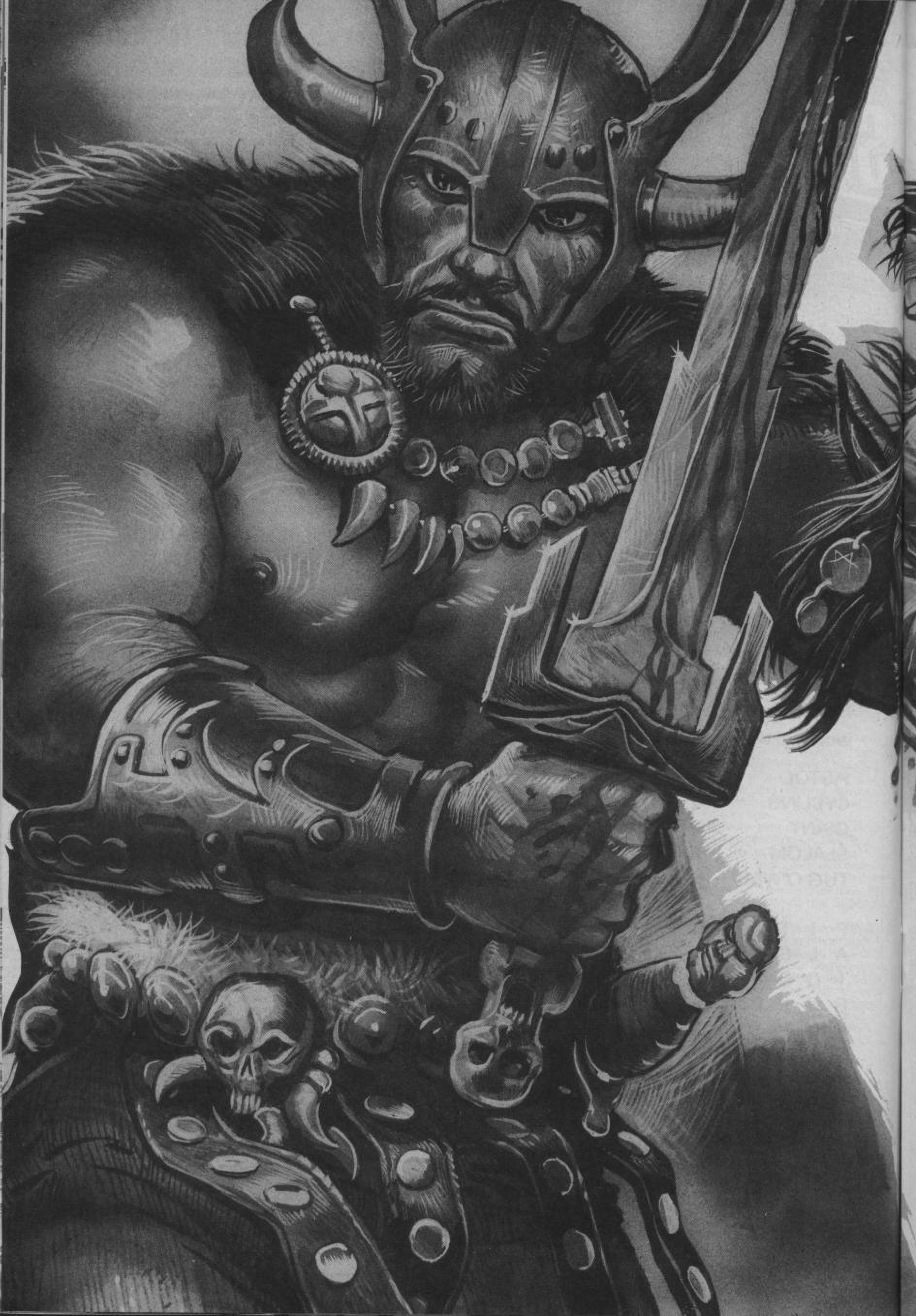


SUPERTEST WORDSEARCH

Find the following words in the square below:

PISTOL	ROWING	SPRING
CYCLING	SKI	BOARD
GIANT	JUMP	DIVING
SLALOM	SHOOTING	PENALTIES
TUG O'WAR		

P	I	T	L	T	M	C	Y	C	O	S	H	D
A	L	S	E	I	T	L	A	N	E	P	L	S
I	O	D	R	A	O	V	L	B	L	R	R	N
G	J	L	B	T	N	A	I	G	S	I	N	A
K	N	H	S	G	B	K	N	N	P	N	I	M
G	A	I	N	T	S	R	G	I	I	G	R	O
I	P	C	L	A	H	N	R	V	N	T	O	O
P	M	R	A	C	I	I	D	I	E	U	W	J
T	U	G	A	T	Y	E	Y	D	U	A	I	M
P	J	P	O	U	O	C	L	U	R	S	N	S
O	M	O	W	G	K	P	J	H	G	A	G	I
K	H	V	A	S	U	V	S	L	A	L	O	M
S	L	S	K	P	T	C	I	D	M	W	J	B





FIGHTING WITH A FANTASY

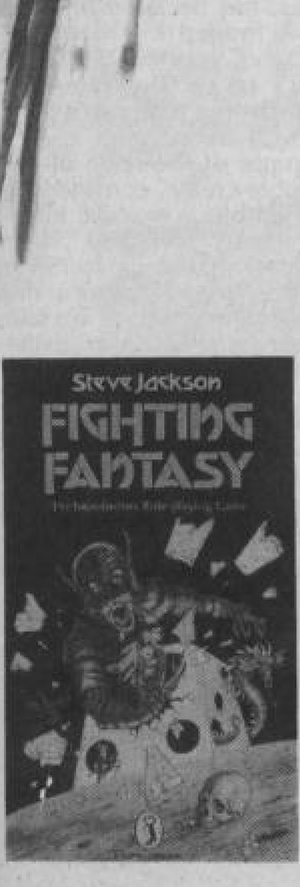
Many computer games and Adventure Gamebooks have their roots in the same soil, and recently they have been moving towards each other. SEAN MASTERSON takes a look at some of the tales behind this publishing success story and investigates the interface between book and computer game.

GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

In their time at the keyboard, most computer gamers have spent some of it trying to escape from the deepest of dungeons or attempting to defeat the of deadliest dragons. Many of these are also likely to play **Role Playing Games** (**R P G** s for short) which adorn the market nowadays. These games, typified by such success stories as *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Traveller* involve highly complex group sessions, organised in the most abstract way. Participants often spend days or even weeks developing character backgrounds to play, which are formed from a mixture of the player's imaginations and mathematical notations (as an expression of the relevant rules system). An arbitrarily appointed referee designs the actual plot for the upcoming adventure. When all is ready, the group meets and a free-form game commences in the form of group discussions and dice rolls cross-referenced with the rules.

The games themselves can last for months or years if intelligently played and refereed, and once finished, the same rules and players may start the whole process again. The objectives are as abstract as the games themselves with monetary rewards or power and personal fulfilment available to the successful character. Players participate for the fun of the affair.

In the UK, two names come to mind more than any others: **Steve Jackson** and **Ian Livingstone** (see CRASH 13 February — *Here there be Monsters*). Whilst they have yet to achieve massive appeal in the US where role playing began, they dominate the UK and European gaming world for two main reasons. Firstly, they had the foresight to see that *Dungeons & Dragons* was destined to be a runaway success, and as a consequence of this flash of inspiration, formed **Games Workshop**, the most successful specialist games company this side of the Atlantic. The second reason is that between them, they invented the **Fighting Fantasy** phenomenon.



Selling Fighting Fantasy isn't only a matter of writing the books and marketing them, it's also a case of promoting the concept generally. FIGHTING FANTASY — THE INTRODUCTORY ROLE-PLAYING GAME is Steve Jackson's handbook on how to write your own fantasy adventures.

FIGHTIN

GAMES FOR THE SOLE

Fighting Fantasy is, in effect, a solo role playing game in the form of a paperback book. The first of these was *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*. Now, there are seventeen books in this series alone (though more of them are being written by guest authors) and there have been a variety of new, independent series by other authors and publishers.

Many hard core RPGers have laughed at the relative simplicity and limitations of such game books but they have, if nothing else, been responsible for a whole new breed of role players, as they serve as a perfect introduction to youngsters barely in their teens (at one point, the average age for a role player was about 19). It may be of interest to note that many of the authors now writing these **Adventure Gamebooks** (as they are more generally known) are ex-Games Workshop employees. This is not unusual as being an ex-Games Workshop employee myself, I'm fully aware that being an absolute games nut was one of the qualifications for the job!

In fact, these games are more similar to computer adventure games than true role playing games, as both are aimed at the single player, and both have option restrictions (due to the nature of the media) that would not be present in a conventional RPG. This has led to computer spin-offs of the books. Messrs Livingstone and Jackson have had a computer version of their first book released (*Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, programmed by Crystal) and *The Way of the Tiger* series about a ninja warrior, written by **Mark Smith** and **Jamie Thomson**, who is ex-features editor of *White Dwarf* magazine, is about to be converted for the popular home micros by **Gremlin Graphics**.

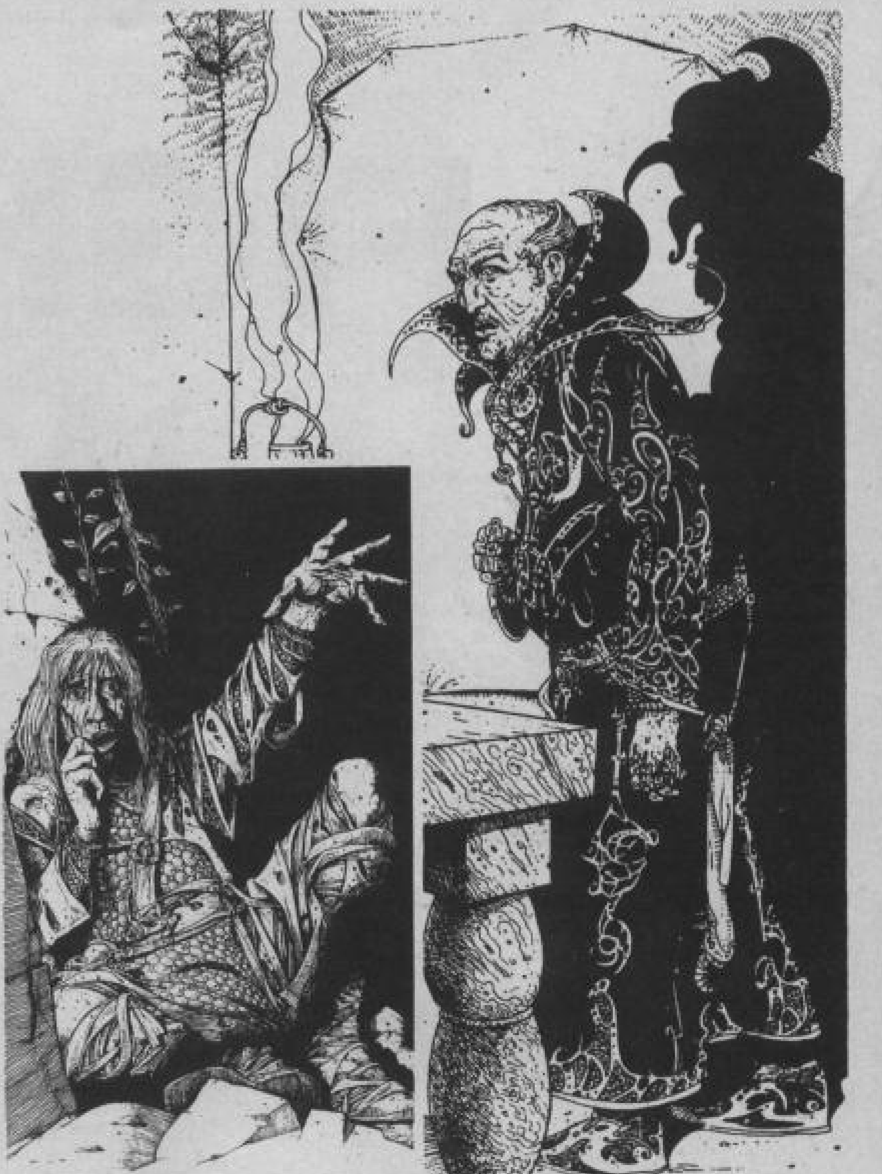
The Way of the Tiger series is based around Avenger, a ninja warrior of unparalleled skills and deadly powers. His adventures all centre on scenarios calling for him to defend the weak and downtrodden. The Gremlin Graphics team are working in close co-operation with the two authors, and Gremlin's **Ian Stewart** says the series will offer the best in gameplay and graphics.

With the type stories most popular in adventure gamebooks, it isn't surprising to see an adventure-based software house like **Adventure International** also involving themselves, and as we have reported before in CRASH, Steve Jackson's *The Swordmaster* series is still under development with AI.

Almost every gamebook relies on black and white illustrations to add to the atmosphere, partly because they are fun to have, but partly because the atmosphere normally created by words in a novel is generally lacking when text sections are broken up as much as they are in adventure books.

Some of the illustrations are pretty dreadful, but Granada's "Golden Dragon" series have some excellent drawings, like the two shown here, one of which seems to rely heavily on horror actor Vincent Price's features . . .

The illustrations by Russ Nicholson are from No 4 in the series, THE EYE OF THE DRAGON written by Dave Morris.



YOU, THE HERO

Adventure Gamebooks have now reached massive proportions and they frequently dominate the children's best-sellers lists. The Fighting Fantasy series proved hugely successful from the start, and having encouraged many other series, it was inevitable that the genre would begin to move away from its origins in D&D in search of a wider range of storylines — and a wider audience. From the traditional swords and sorcery approach, some adventure gamebooks have moved as far as a 'Mills & Boon' romance type, employing the same basic techniques as their hack and slay predecessors! Puffin's *Ice Dancer* by Elizabeth Buchan and Tessa Strickland puts YOU into the whirlwind action of the ice skating champ — *The Olympics are on the way and YOU, an exceptionally talented young skater, have a chance to compete for your country. But beware! The path to fame and success is not easy. There are unexpected dangers to face, enemies to outwit and, above all, a gold medal to win . . . .*

Note the use of the word **YOU**. There has long been two schools of thought when it comes to involving the reader in a gamebook — should the hero/ine be nameless, so that the reader, YOU, can play yourself, or is it better for the author to provide a named hero/ine with which the reader/player identifies? In the main, the former school of thought seems to be the most popular, and in this respect adventure gamebooks are unusual because in almost every other medium you can think of, a named central character (the 'I' or 'HE/SHE' of a book, film, computer game etc) is considered essential to enjoyment.

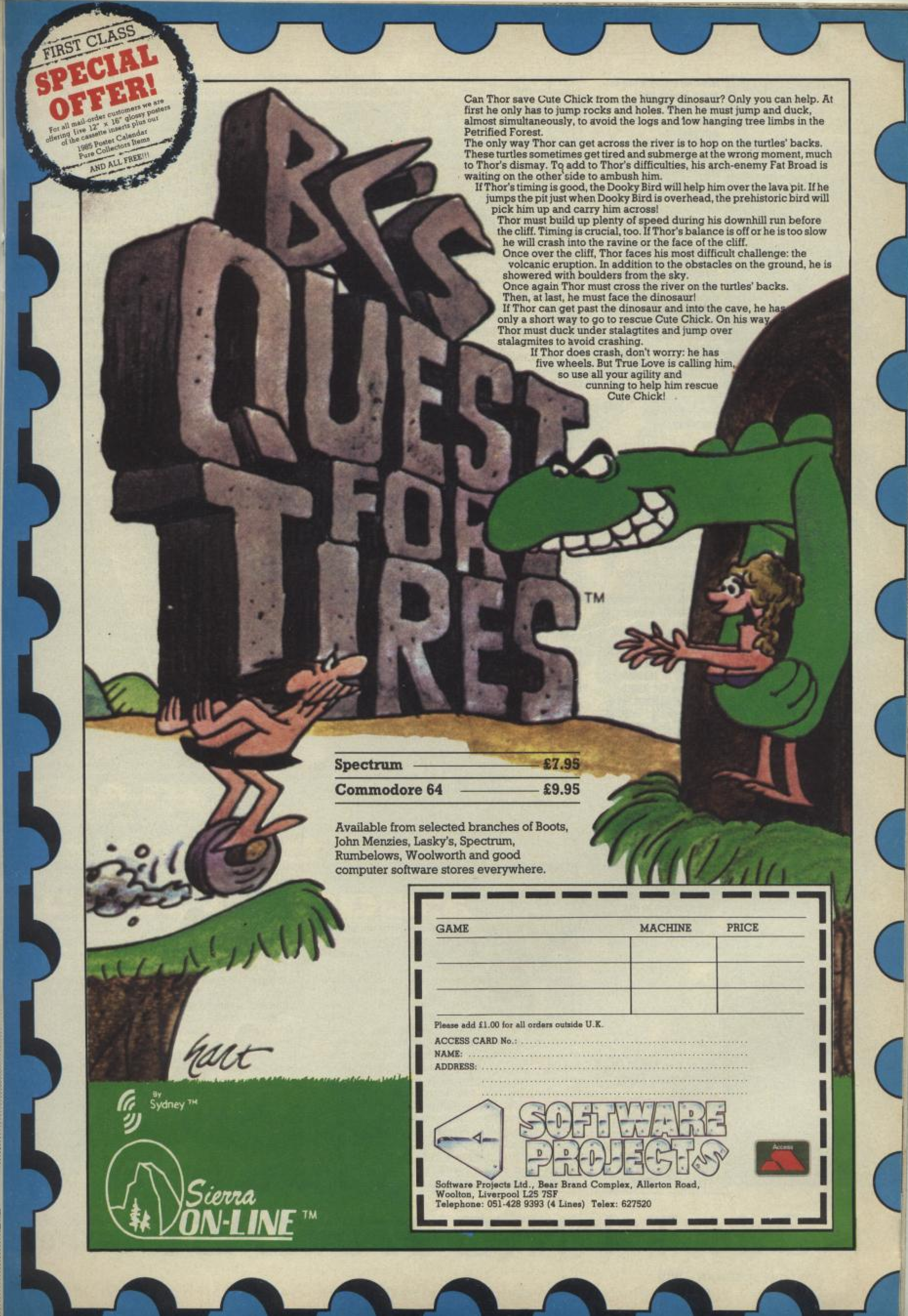
However, one area where gamebooks and computer games tend to be alike is in dual authorship. Not every computer game is written by a team or a duo, but most are, and most popular gamebooks are by two authors as well. Although the individual's labours may be split in any number of ways, there seems to be a tendency for one to be the gameplay expert (devising the combat systems etc) and the other to be the 'novelist'; similarly with computer games, where the game design and programming expertise are becoming slightly separated elements. Dual authorship can often lead to personality clashes of course, and the role playing and adventure gamebook market has had plenty of those besides ones peculiar to itself.

COMBAT STATUS

The games industry itself, is full of problems. More people get sued in any given week than the software industry manages in a year. The English market, though proportionately smaller than its American cousin, is far more stable. This is due to the large 'bible bashing' contingent which, in the States, has declared RPGs as the work of the Devil! Indeed they have gone so far as to accuse **Gary Gygax** (of *D&D* fame) of being the Devil's patsy. They are now taking TV and radio airtime to enforce their philosophies.

As an example of the scale of the problems these people create, consider the case of Proctor & Gamble, a massive international pharmaceuticals company. Their company logo is remarkably similar to TSR's. It depicts a man in the Moon, looking at the stars. TSR's shows a bearded wizard in a half moon, surrounded by stars. According to the bible-bashers, this is conclusive evidence that TSR are in league with the Devil. Unfortunately, their Divine Insight failed to stop them from confusing TSR with Proctor & Gamble. The result has been that the latter company has had up to 20,000 phone calls of an abusive or threatening nature — per day. As a result of this, Proctor & Gamble have dropped the logo that successfully headed their company for 150 years! They are now seeking legal action against 'those they feel responsible' for their troubles.

Companies are also highly protective of their game products and trademark just about anything that falls within their grasp. For instance, Americans spell the word **'traveler'** with only one **L**. Consequently, when the Illnois based **Game Designers' Workshop** (no relation to Games Workshop)



FIRST CLASS
SPECIAL OFFER!
For all mail-order customers we are offering five 12" x 16" glossy posters of the cassette inserts plus our
1985 Poster Calendar
Pure Collectors Items
AND ALL FREE!!!
BC's QUEST FOR TIRES™
Can Thor save Cute Chick from the hungry dinosaur? Only you can help. At first he only has to jump rocks and holes. Then he must jump and duck, almost simultaneously, to avoid the logs and low hanging tree limbs in the Petrified Forest.
The only way Thor can get across the river is to hop on the turtles' backs. These turtles sometimes get tired and submerge at the wrong moment, much to Thor's dismay. To add to Thor's difficulties, his arch-enemy Fat Broad is waiting on the other side to ambush him.
If Thor's timing is good, the Dooky Bird will help him over the lava pit. If he jumps the pit just when Dooky Bird is overhead, the prehistoric bird will pick him up and carry him across!
Thor must build up plenty of speed during his downhill run before the cliff. Timing is crucial, too. If Thor's balance is off or he is too slow he will crash into the ravine or the face of the cliff.
Once over the cliff, Thor faces his most difficult challenge: the volcanic eruption. In addition to the obstacles on the ground, he is showered with boulders from the sky.
Once again Thor must cross the river on the turtles' backs.
Then, at last, he must face the dinosaur!
If Thor can get past the dinosaur and into the cave, he has only a short way to go to rescue Cute Chick. On his way, Thor must duck under stalagtites and jump over stalagmites to avoid crashing.
If Thor does crash, don't worry: he has five wheels. But True Love is calling him, so use all your agility and cunning to help him rescue Cute Chick!
Spectrum £7.95
Commodore 64 £9.95
Available from selected branches of Boots, John Menzies, Lasky's, Spectrum, Rumbelows, Woolworth and good computer software stores everywhere.
GAME
MACHINE
PRICE
Please add £1.00 for all orders outside U.K.
ACCESS CARD No.:
NAME:
ADDRESS:
SOFTWARE PROJECTS
Software Projects Ltd., Bear Brand Complex, Allerton Road, Woolton, Liverpool L25 7SF
Telephone: 051-428 9393 (4 Lines) Telex: 627520
Access
hart
By Sydney™
Sierra ON-LINE™



Moving away from the more traditional sword and sorcery approach, recent Adventure Gamebooks have delved into the classic young people's adventure story. THE FEATHERED SERPENT is a Nancy Drew & the Hardy Boys story in Armada's "Be a Detective" series. A priceless Mexican treasure of burnished gold lies at the end of the quest — which clues should the famous sleuths follow? Only YOU can decide!

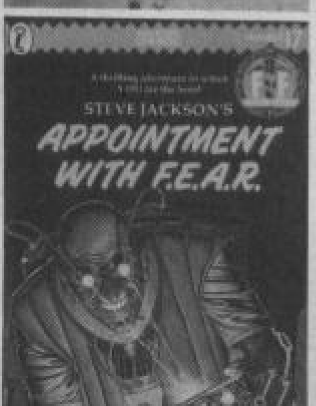
This book, more traditionally, follows the adventures of the gang without you involved in the storyline.



This illustration by Leo Hartas shows how far adventure gamebook artists will go to create animation in their pictures, emulating the movement of animated computer graphics by using techniques borrowed from comic strips. See how the perspective on the sword arm heightens the effect that the monster is slashing at you from the page. This one is from No 3 in Granada's "Golden Dragon" series, THE LORD OF SHADOW KEEP, written by Oliver Johnson.



Elizabeth Buchan & Tessa Strickland's ICE DANCER, No 5 under the Puffin Adventure Game Books imprint. Aimed more at girls than boys, there's gold at the end of this one too, but in the form of an Olympic medal.



From the British co-Granddaddy, Steve Jackson, APPOINTMENT WITH F.E.A.R. takes the Fighting Fantasy genre away from its sword and sorcery beginnings into the world of the future.

brought out their best-selling SF game, *Traveller*, two L's were used to distinguish the product and the name was trade-marked. One of Steve Jackson's early Fighting Fantasy books was called *Starship Traveller*. Now, for the English market, this is not particularly unusual, as it employs our spelling of the word. This little detail failed to impress GDW who claimed that it was a breach of copyright and threatened action against Mr Jackson!

If it wasn't enough to have games personalities and companies creating hassles for each other left right and centre, more problems are created by the obscure nature of the products themselves. Earlier this year, Games Workshop ordered a product from an American company called **Steve Jackson Games** (different Steve Jackson, I'm afraid — now that has led to some funny incidents). Steve Jackson Games manufactures the highly successful *Car Wars* (reminiscent of Games Workshop's *Battlecars* computer game), winner of many of the industry's top awards. It's a game with RPG overtones where the players build and control futuristic vehicles, armed to the teeth with lasers and missiles and duel against each other. The supplement to this game, which Games Workshop ordered, was called *The AADA Vehicle Guide*. In effect, it is a manual of pre-designed vehicles for the players to use in their games. Unfortunately, a customs spot check at Dover resulted in the product being impounded for several months because they claimed it was a mail order catalogue of terrorist weaponry!

The fun doesn't stop there. Many of the games employ the use of unusual dice called polyhedra dice, for the purposes of generating different probability curves. Because these dice aren't generally available, they are often included with the game. However, when it can be avoided, are they left out and you have to purchase them separately. This may appear awkward but there is logic behind the move. Books and magazines are exempted from VAT. Since most RPGs come in form of collections of rules books, if dice are excluded from the packaging, the products may be marketed as 'boxed books' and therefore carry no VAT. Games packaged with dice must be sold as 'games' and do carry VAT and are, therefore, disproportionately more expensive. This has led to countless problems with customs and tax officials and on at least one occasion, a company has had to withdraw every copy of the game from the shelves and repack it with dice.

FRESH BLOOD AND BUGS

The games industry is still a great one however. It grows and becomes more commercial every day but it's an industry of imaginations with room for fortunes to be made if you have a good idea and — take the right route.

Chaosium are an American company who produce games of consistently amazing quality and ingenuity. One of their greatest success stories is the game *Call of Cthulhu* based on the horror mythos invented by novelist **HP Lovecraft**. Apart from being a beautifully and carefully created game, true to the atmosphere the late author adored, it has some very interesting features. Most games award some kind of 'experience points' for well played characters. These allow a character to become more skilled within his chosen class or profession as the campaign progresses. This means that a Fighter gains better chances of hitting creatures with a sword for instance. A magician finds that his spells succeed more often and that he has access to more powerful magic. Such a system, Chaosium decided, wasn't really in the spirit of a horror story. In fact, in most Lovecraft stories, the main character usually dies either because the horrors that he faces are so powerful, or he goes insane because they are so obscene. Consequently, in the game, each character has a number of sanity points which diminish as they uncover more of the erudite lore! Successful play requires the players to skirt around the edge of the problems they face whilst still trying to learn as much as possible and warn the rest of mankind. Major confrontations result in almost certain instant death for the characters.

Suspense becomes the name of the game and the characters know that their situation is desperate and their cause almost lost, right from the moment that they begin play. In a morbid way, it can be amusing to see total beginners getting wiped out after spending their first hour arming their characters to the teeth.

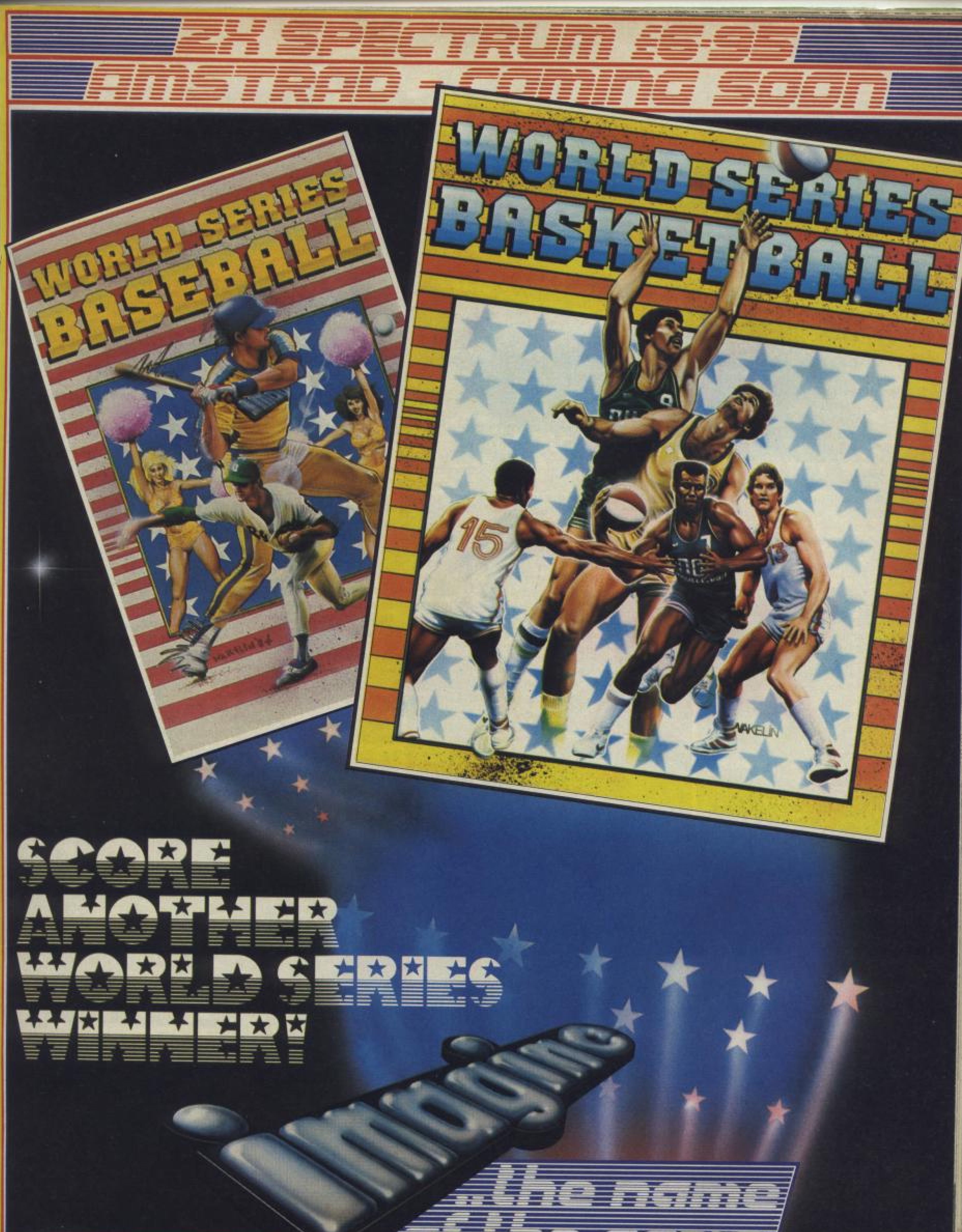
After all these tales of horror and woe, it's reassuring to know that the industry has a sense of humour as well. There was once a game called *Bunnies & Burrows* — try and imagine what that was like to play. The funniest aspects of gaming, however, derive from the almighty cock-ups pervading almost every rules system ever devised, which resemble the ubiquitous 'bugs' to be found in almost any computer game program.

One of the prolific (American) Steve Jackson's games magazines, *The Space Gamer*, has a column called **Murphy's Rules** to bring some of these details to the hobbyists' attention. Some of the items lucky enough to grace its pages are hilarious. In Blade's *Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes* it is possible for an average car to be driven headlong into a tank (demolishing it in the process) and remain driveable, 50% of the time. In GDW's *Azhanti High Lightening* (a game set aboard an enormous space ship), it is possible to have an infinite number of dead bodies covering an area of floor 1.5m x 1.5m and still have a fully laden character pass through without any problem whatsoever!

But these little 'bugs' only reflect relatively tiny errors in what are really incredibly complex rules systems and as the games are themselves designed to be altered to suit individual tastes, they cause no problem. Gamers take a far more paticipative approach to their games than computer gamers can ever hope to.

The hobby does not appear to be the fad which many hard-core wargamers once accused it of being. It offers more scope to the imaginative, than any group pastime yet devised. The hobby was born out of a love for things of a complex nature such as Tolkien's books, Wargaming, and the era of progressive rock. It may sound like a strange mixture of inspirations but it's true. There are a myriad of philosophies as to what makes a good game, or indeed what makes a good player but this is a healthy sign for the hobby and the more these arguments take place, the more their outcomes will add to adventure gamebooks. One day the areas of computer gaming and Role Playing are destined to overlap and that should provide us all with games more imaginative and fulfilling than any seen to date.

The ever increasing popularity of Fighting Fantasy and Role Playing looks set to bring more ideas, egos and costly arguments into the field of battle. I, for one, will be there to see it!


ZX SPECTRUM £6·95
AMSTRAD – COMING SOON
WORLD SERIES BASEBALL
WORLD SERIES BASKETBALL
SCORE ANOTHER WORLD SERIES WINNER!
Imagine
..the name of the game



THE CUSTARD KID

Producer: Fun 'N Games
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£4.99**
Language: **machine code**

New Generation have joined the budget software market with their new sub-label, Fun 'N Games. For the moment there are just two titles in this range: *Custard Kid* and *Cliff Hanger*.

Custard Kid has elements of arcade and strategy games as well as adventure and cooking. The cooking part comes from the main theme of the game which involves collecting 12 custard recipies. The layout of the playing area is a little like that of *Atic Attack* where the player looks down into a room guiding the man back and forth. The adventure element of the game requires the player to find a number of different objects, the most common being the colour coded keys. If you want to go through a door to discover what is behind you must be in possession of the appropriately coloured key. The colour of the door also gives you an indication of what type of room you can expect to find on the other side. For example a red door will lead you into a either a stairway or a dungeon while a green door leads to a side corridor. You can only use each key once so keep a good stock.

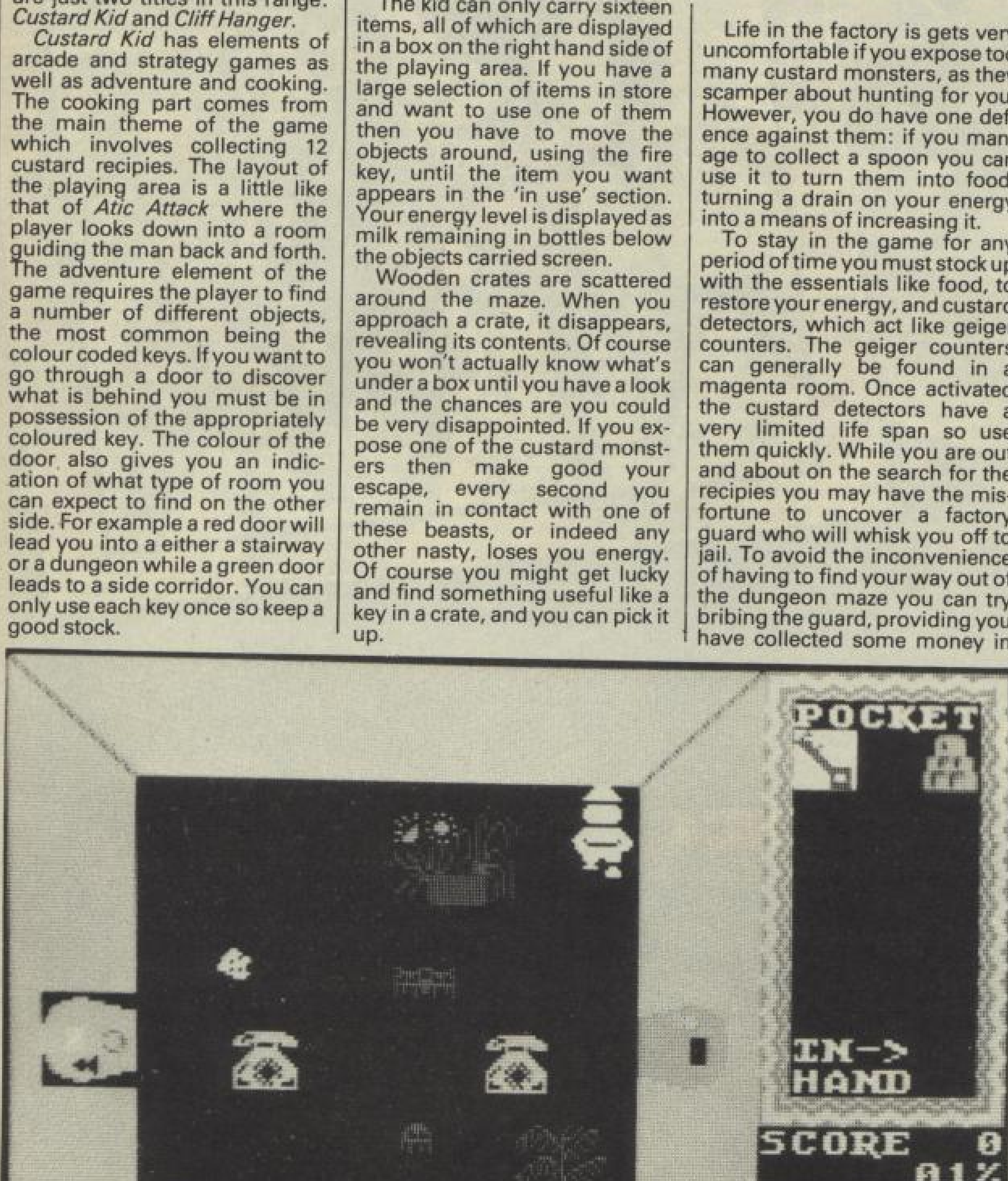
The kid can only carry sixteen items, all of which are displayed in a box on the right hand side of the playing area. If you have a large selection of items in store and want to use one of them then you have to move the objects around, using the fire key, until the item you want appears in the 'in use' section. Your energy level is displayed as milk remaining in bottles below the objects carried screen.

Wooden crates are scattered around the maze. When you approach a crate, it disappears, revealing its contents. Of course you won't actually know what's under a box until you have a look and the chances are you could be very disappointed. If you expose one of the custard monsters then make good your escape, every second you remain in contact with one of these beasts, or indeed any other nasty, loses you energy. Of course you might get lucky and find something useful like a key in a crate, and you can pick it up.

Life in the factory is gets very uncomfortable if you expose too many custard monsters, as they scamper about hunting for you. However, you do have one defence against them: if you manage to collect a spoon you can use it to turn them into food, turning a drain on your energy into a means of increasing it.

To stay in the game for any period of time you must stock up with the essentials like food, to restore your energy, and custard detectors, which act like geiger counters. The geiger counters can generally be found in a magenta room. Once activated the custard detectors have a very limited life span so use them quickly. While you are out and about on the search for the recipies you may have the misfortune to uncover a factory guard who will whisk you off to jail. To avoid the inconvenience of having to find your way out of the dungeon maze you can try bribing the guard, providing you have collected some money in the first place.

This game offers a long list of playing options. Up to four players can take it in turns to uncover the mysteries of the custard factory or you can select play to be between two teams of two, each team having its own score.



COMMENTS

● **'For the money I really can't believe this game is worth the asking price. For a little less it could have been worth it. The graphics are probably its greatest failure: they are too chunky and characterless to make the game enjoyable. Without doubt a great deal of time is required to find your way around the factory, but I have a suspicion that only the dedicated mappers and explorers will get their money's worth.'**

● *'I had quite a difficult time with this game; there is great deal to do and a very large area in which to do it. The graphics are not very good but there are a number of interesting facets. The monsters are quite fun but very easy to escape from. Of all the ideas within this game I like the guards the best. If you don't manage to bribe them then you end up in the nick, which means you have to work your way out of a maze before you can get back to the real work. Some people will get quite a lot out of this but it really is quite dated, in gameplay and appearance.'*

● 'At first *Custard Kid* seems to be a bit of a bore but after a while it grows on you. Now I can't see myself putting it away for a few hours at least. Graphically it isn't stunning but it works well enough given the animation. Sound is hardly used at all except for the odd spot effect. Playability wise there isn't a great deal that's new in this one so it doesn't appeal to me that much. It just has that something which says that you must complete it before you put it away.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right, R/D up/down, x,y to fire, CAPS to eat food and set off detectors
Joystick: Kempston and Interface II
Keyboard play: fine
Use of colour: quite attractive
Graphics: not very detailed
Sound: very little
Skill levels: one
Screens: 600 locations
General rating: dated but above average

Use of computer	**70%**
Graphics	**63%**
Playability	**61%**
Getting started	**75%**
Addictive qualities	**74%**
Value for money	**60%**
Overall	**65%**


BOUNTY BOB STRIKES BACK! TM
THE MOST ADDICTIVE PLATFORM GAME YET DEVISED
Twenty-five all-new levels
Multi-channel music
Automatic Demo Mode
Level 'Warp' ability
Level 24 - "Mutants On The Move!"
Level 3 - "The Suction Tubes"
Level 11 - "The Super Slippery Slide"
Available for
AMSTRAD
ATARI
64
SPECTRUM
BBC
Yukon Yohan
STARRING BOUNTY BOB! TM
by Bill Hogue
Bounty Bob™ returns in this new and exciting follow-up adventure to Miner 2049er.® This time around it's even tougher than before and Bob needs your help more than ever to guide him through the mine. The mutant organisms have multiplied and over-run the mine entirely, making it extremely difficult to survive the hazards of the underground passageways. Using the high-powered special equipment in the twenty-five new caverns is Bob's only hope of achieving his objective of securing the mine and defeating the plans of the evil Yukon Yohan!™
CASSETTE £7.95
SPECTRUM 48k
All screens as seen on Commodore 64
U.S. GOLD
All American Software
HEALTH WARNING: BOUNTY BOB CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR SANITY!

CRASH ZX SPECTRUM

SUBSCRIB

COUPLE O

"Stupendous offer" **THE HULK**
"Really Webby Deal" **SPIDERMAN**
"Great Scott . . . What an offer!" **ANON**
"Spellbinding" **THE SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE**

FREE

£20-worth of Adventure International Softw

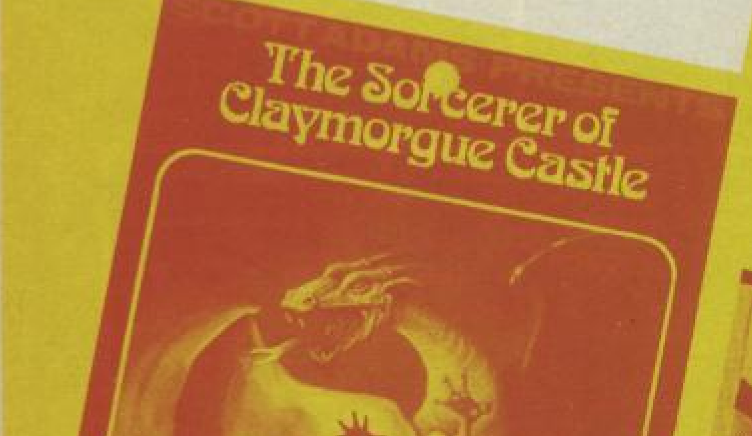
The Marketing Minion decided it was time to let all you adventurers have a piece of the Subscription Offer Action. For too long now, adventurers have been left in the cold when it comes to getting a good deal on the old Subscription front, so here we go with a smash-eroonie offer on some ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL titles.

Invest £14.50 in a twelve month subscription to CRASH and not only will Auntie Dennis, Subscription Queen, send you a dozen different issues of CRASH spaced out at monthly intervals, but Auntie Aggie will also whizz you your choice of adventure games. Well, two of the games featured on these pages, anyway — what DO you expect, eh? And these games normally sell for £9.95 in the shops, so that's a saving of a whole £19.90. If you bought two subscriptions, you could save £39.80. . . .

Two whole adventure games for free's no bad deal — and what with the long, dark nights drawing in — can you think of a better way to spend the evenings than forging your way through an adventure game? It's that, or boring old repeats on the telly. Ignore Bet Lynch's danglies for a change; turn Joan Collins off. Throw away your Soaps this winter and have an adventure.

REMEMBER: Adventuring is guaranteed to be a non-socially-irresponsible pastime; is absolutely unharmful to both your health and the well-being of small furry animals and while occasionally frustrating, is generally better for developing brain cells that Cod Liver Oil. (Adventures taste nicer, too!)

What more could you want? Fill in the form right now, and pester Aggie for your late-night entertainment this winter!



THE SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE
You are Beanwick, faithful apprentice of Solon the master wizard. Thirteen Stars of Power have been concealed within Claymorgue Castle by the evil Vileroth and it is your task to retrieve them for your master. Armed with only a few spells you must enter and explore the forbidding castle.
A difficult graphic adventure which won an overall rating of 7 from Derek, who commended its commercial polish.



SECRET MISSION
A frantic race against time. A madman has placed a bomb at the core of a nuclear reactor complex and it is up to you to avert disaster. The automatic security system which guards the complex doesn't want to let anyone in, and you must solve a range of puzzles and problems to convince the system to give you access to the bomb so you can deactivate it. No time for leisurely pondering, this one's played against the clock!



THE HULK
Judged to be a CRASH SMASH by Derek little over a year ago, this program is the first in the Questprobe series from Adventure International. Featuring Dr Banner and his big, green alter ego The Hulk, this illustrated adventure follows the theme of the Marvel comicbooks where the characters first saw the light of day.
You play the role of Bannister/Hulk and have to tackle a range of problems on your way to finding a collection of gems. "A truly marvellous adventure with super graphics" is what Derek had to say.

IBE, AND

OF FREE

tware

GO ON A ADVENTURES



SPIDERMAN
Another CRASH SMASH for part two of the Quest probe series. This time you play Spidey in his fight against crime, as personified by the wicked Mysterio, an evil man who uses his background in film special effects to create illusions and confusion for Spidey.
Once again, excellent graphics support the adventure which captures the original feel of the comic book tales of Spiderman.

Adventure INTERNATIONAL 1

ADVENTURELAND

"with Superb Graphics"



ADVENTURELAND
The first Scott Adams adventure, which sets you on a quest for thirteen lost treasures in an enchanted realm. The one that started it all, as they say. Thrill to stumping round a maze, puzzle over problems, fight nasty beasties or get eaten — it's what adventuring's all about you know, it's not a cushy number



SUBSCRIBING ALREADY? Don't Fret

If you're already a member of that growing band of smart cookies, known in the trade as CRASH SUBSCRIBERS, then you might feel a bit left out — maybe you have little planned for those long winter evenings, and would like to wrap you mind round a couple of Scott Adams type adventureipoos.

Well you can. As a favour to existing subscribers, we can offer two games of your choice for the measly sum of £6.95, so long as you quote your subscriber number on the coupon. Aggie and Dennis are quite generous really, you know . . .

I WANNA GO ADVENTURING AGGIE, HELP ME!

Tick box

☐ **You've sold me a subscription for twelve whole months, and I've sent you £14.50 by cheque/postal order so I claim my two freebie adventure games. Gettem in a Jiffy bag now, Aggie dear**

☐ **I'm a smart cookie type and already subscribe, Ags. But I like a good adventure or two, so crumble my digestive and staple a jiffy bag as we say in Smart Cookieland: here's a cheque/postal order for £6.95 and I'd like two games in return**

THE HULK
SPIDERMAN
SECRET MISSION
ADVENTURELAND
THE SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE

Delete the two games that you DO NOT WANT. Cross em out, scribble over their titles with a really dark black felt pen or something. Just leave the titles of the two games you DO want to find on you doorstep inside a jiffy bag. Gottit? Good . . .

Now fill this bit in, nice and neatly:

NAME . . . .

ADDRESS . . . .

. . . .

. . . . POST CODE . . . .

Telephone number . . . .

SUBSCRIBER CODE NUMBER ____________________

Well done! Now whizz the whole lot off, together with a cheque or postal order, but no chinky, clinky round n' hard coins 'cos they jam up the postman's sorting machine. Send it to:

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER
CRASH MAGAZINE
PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire
SY8 1DB
OFFER CLOSES NOVEMBER 30th

WORLD CUP SOCCER

Crash Competition

Meet Ray Clemence and Tour The Spurs' Ground Win Fifty Copies of This Footy Package

So you think you know a bit about football, eh? Reckon you could manage World Cup-Winning squad? Well, McMillan can offer you the chance .... and it beats running around in the mud!

WORLD CUP SOCCER, the latest release from McMillan, comes complete with a thirty two page book which gives you tips and hints about football play and training. It's a mine of useful information on the game's history and development.

On cassette, there are two programs. World Cup Manager puts you in the hot seat — you have to choose your country and your players and then go for the Cup using a combination of strategic and arcade skills. World Cup Factfile puts stacks of information on the history of the Cup at your fingertips and features a one or two player quiz to test your knowledge.

Ray Clemence, Tottenham's Goalie, introduces the book — and will introduce the winners of this competition to the behind the scenes action at a Spurs home match! To enter the compo all you have to do is demonstrate you in-depth knowledge of football . . .

We've taken ten questions from the Factfile Quiz and if you fancy winning one of the fifty copies of the World Cup Soccer package that are up for grabs, or indeed one of the two VIP tickets to a Tottenham Game — get your thinking caps on! We'll be making the draw on 21st November, so get those entries in to

FOOTIE COMPETITION, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

The Questions

1) Who won the World Cup in 1970? a) England, b) Brazil, c) Uruguay, d) Haiti, e) Columbia?

2) Who won the World Cup in 1982? a) Cameroon, b) Peru, c) Belgium, d) East Germany, e) Italy

3) In which city was the 1982 final played a) Mexico City, b) Madrid, c) Paris, d) Munich, e) Buenos Aires

4) In which city was the 1970 final played a) Mexico, b) Paris, c) Madrid, d) Munich, e) Rome

5) Which country hosted the 1974 World Cup a) West Germany, b) Columbia, c) Argentina, d) USA, e) Spain

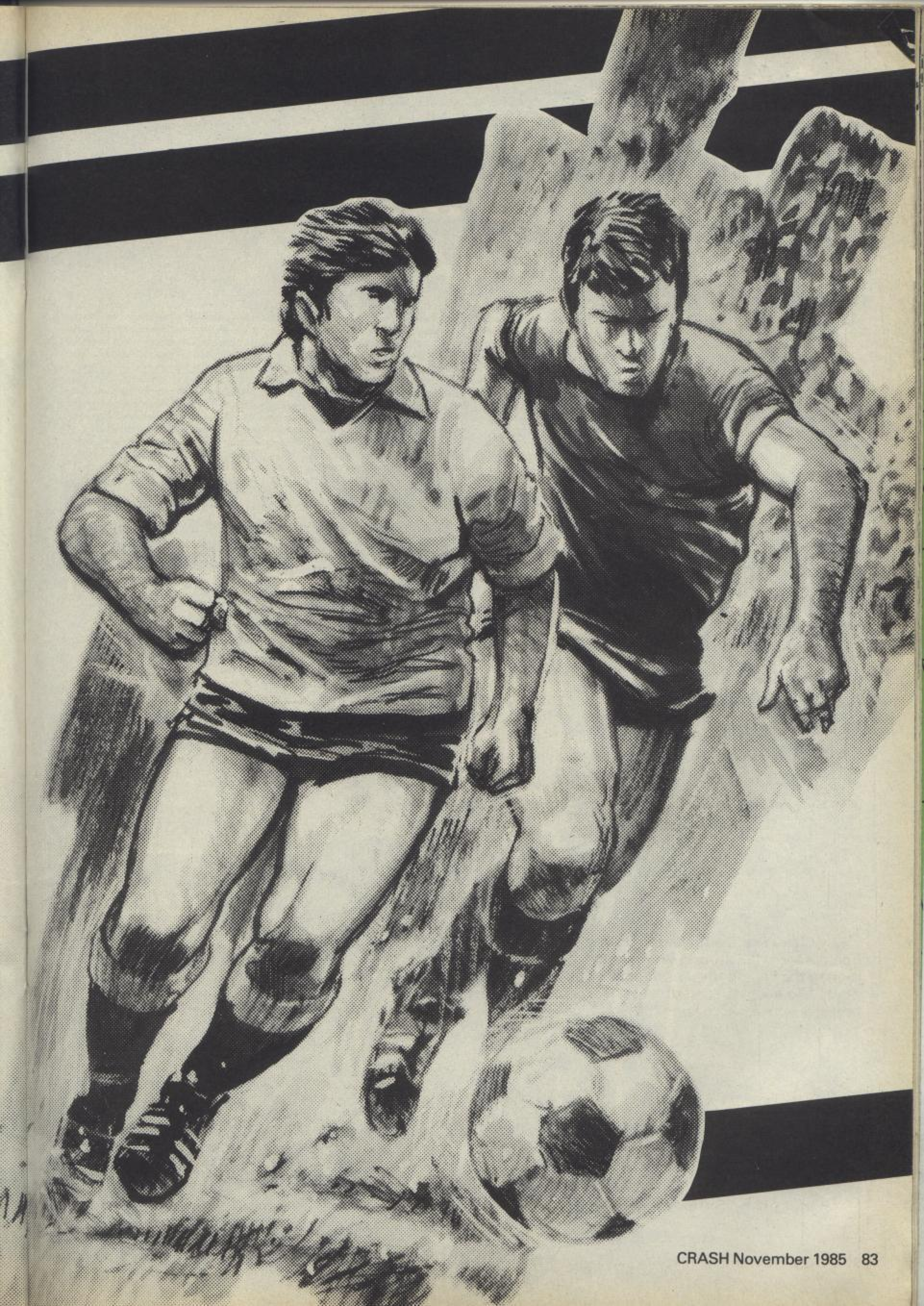
6) Which country hosted the 1978 World Cup a) Argentina, b) Cameroons, c) Iran, d) Zaire, e) Rumania

7) Who came second in 1970 a) West Germany, b) Australia, c) Turkey, d) Cuba, e) Italy

8) Who came second in 1982 a) West Germany, b) Kuwait, c) El Salvador, d) Cuba, e) Portugal

9) Who came third in 1974 a) Iran, b) El Salvador, c) Poland, d) Uruguay, e) Scotland

10) Who came third in 1978 a) East Germany, b)Italy, c) Germany, d) Honduras, e) Brazil



CRASH COURSE



Rosetta McLeod

A SOFTWARE SEXTET FROM LONGMAN

A slightly different format this month, as I look at six programs from Longman Software **in their** *Early Learning* **series. Longman have built up a solid reputation as respected publishers of educational book materials, and they are now attempting to extend their success into the field of computer software, aimed particularly at the home market. The blurb on the attractive packaging tells us that 'each program is based on well-tried educational theories, brought alive by the creative wizardry of modern technology. Your children will be spellbound. . . . The wonder of the computer, the power of its appeal and the balanced variety of games and activities will keep your child fascinated, absorbed . . . and learning.'**

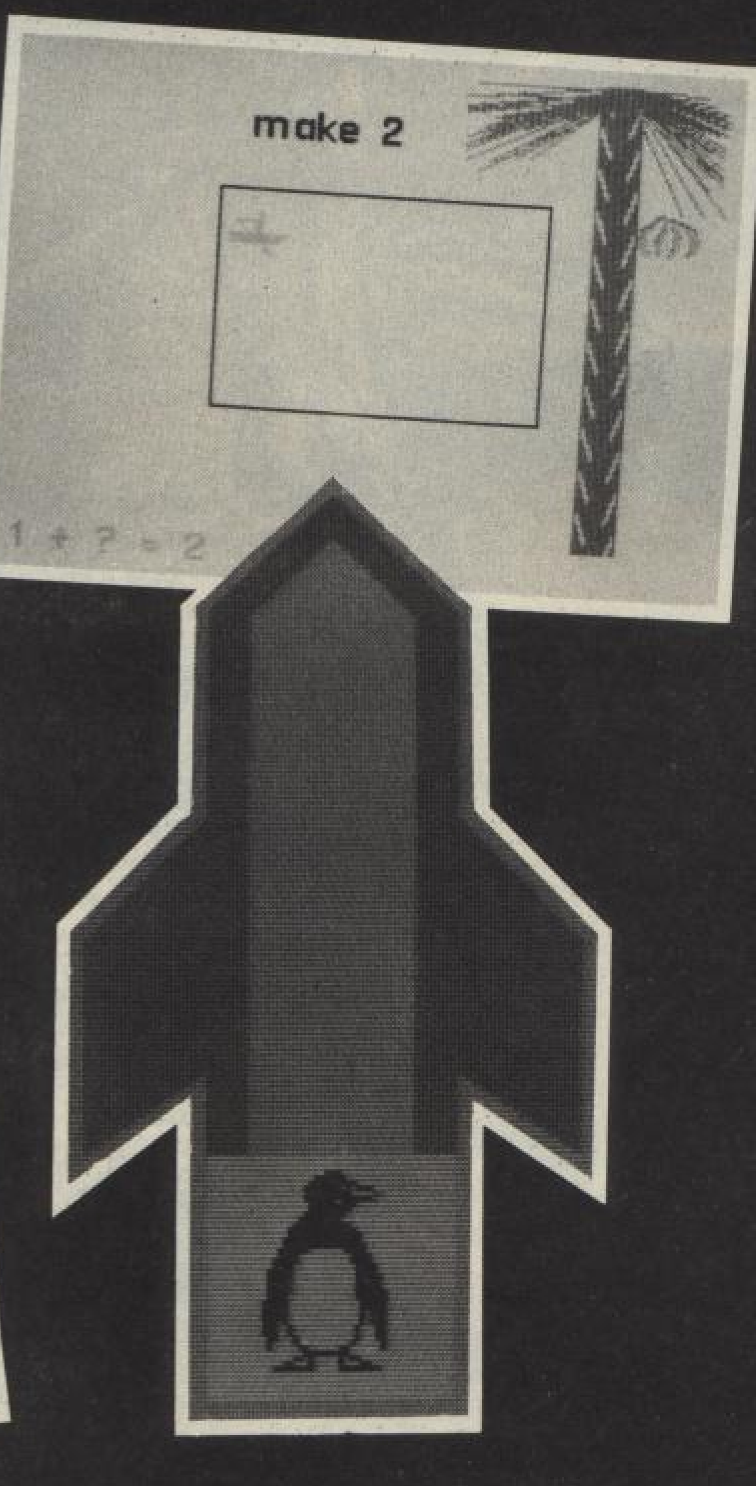
Well, this certainly sounds good, but do the programs live up to these claims? The six programs fall into two distinct categories: *a,b,c, . . . Lift Off!* **and** *Wild Words* **aim to encourage word recognition and spelling while** *Countabout*, *Hot Dot Spotter*, *Sum Scruncher* **and** *Robot Runner* **try to develop counting and number skills. Each package contains a sheet of notes for parents giving easily followed instructions on loading the program and playing the game, as well as a very useful section, Other Things To Do, which suggests some additional (non computer) ways to encourage the specific learning activity.**

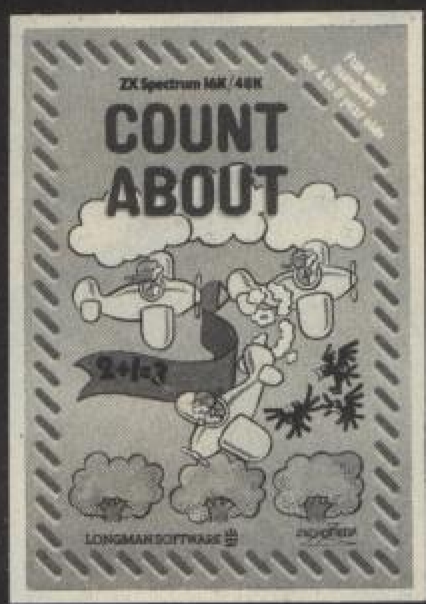
The acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills is, of course, extremely important, and many parents, wishing to do their best for their children, purchase software which claim to stimulate children towards acquiring these skills. A word of caution for parents, however: you child's school is likely to have a carefully constructed syllabus for teaching letter and number work. If you are in any doubt about how to use a computer program to supplement this work, it might be a good idea to contact your child's teacher for a chat.

a,b,c . . . LIFT-OFF!

This letter and word-recognition program is in two parts. The alphabetic order game displays at the start a picture of an apple, the word 'apple' and the letter A. The player is then asked to press the next letter, and is rewarded with the picture of a bus, the word and the initial letter. Pressing ENTER changes the game to A, B, C . . . Lift-Off! The screen shows a conveyor belt for loading crates onto a rocket. The child has to match the object which appears on the conveyor belt with the correct word displayed at the top of the screen. If the word and object match, the S key (for Snap) is pressed, and when the rocket is fully loaded with its six objects, it takes off.

This is a simple but useful program which young children will enjoy, though the speed of the Snap game is too fast for the lower age range.



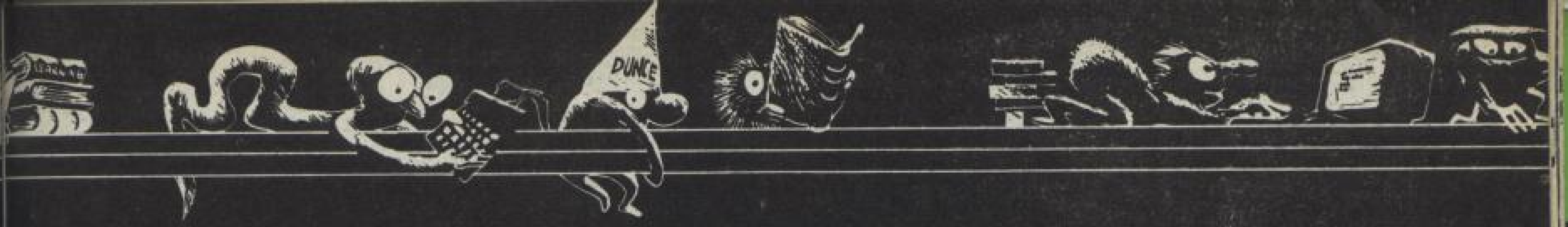




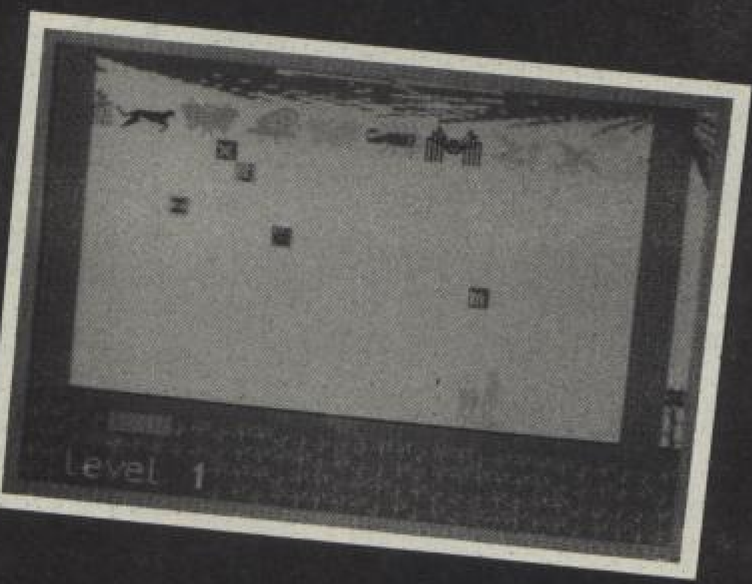
COUNT ABOUT

Another number game, *Count About* attempts to give practice in addition and subtraction in the number range 1 to 9. A number of objects appear on the screen (birds, clocks, crocodiles etc) together with a simple sum. For example, if two objects are displayed on screen, the player might be instructed to 'Make 6: 2 plus ? equals 6'. If the correct number key is pressed, the equivalent number of objects appears on the screen together with the completed sum.

Visually this game is much more appealing than *Hot Dot Spotter*, and the sort of structured reinforcement approach it involves is quite useful in achieving its limited objectives.



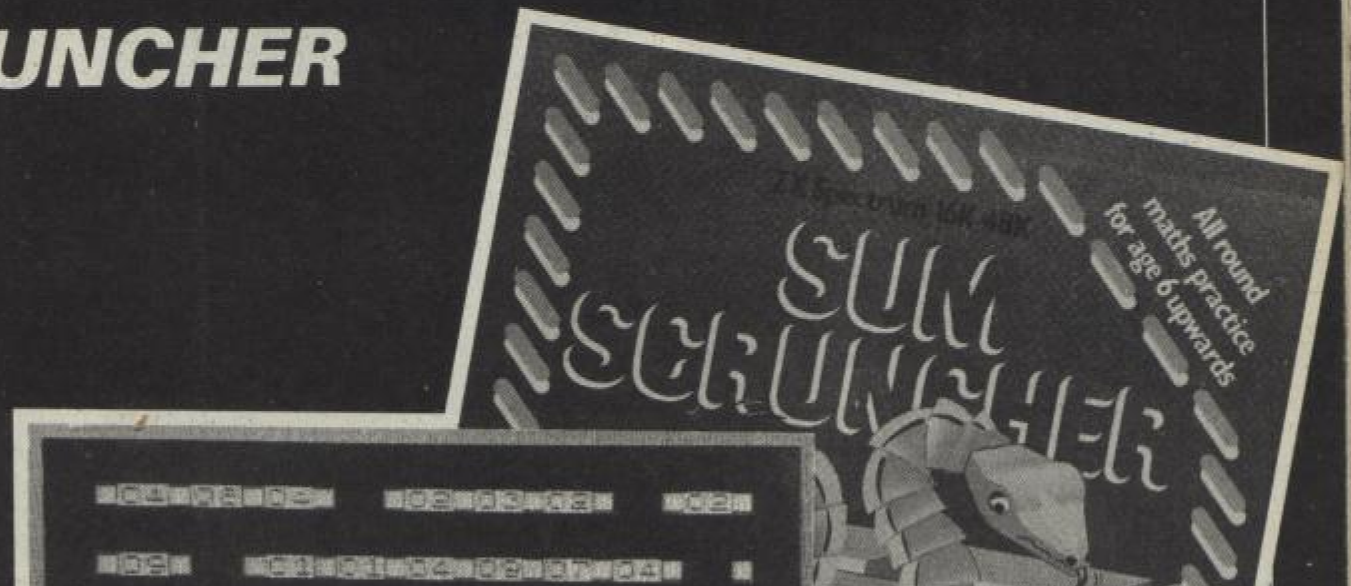
WILD WORDS



Wild Words is a spelling game covering over 200 words which range from 3 to 14 letters in length. The menu offers 5 levels of difficulty — level 1 includes simple words like 'burr', while more complex spellings such as 'people' appear at level 5. When the choice of level has been made, the target word appears for a short time at the bottom of the screen. During the game, the player can see the word again by pressing H. The game element involves the child having to use the horizontal cursor keys (or 5 and 8 on the Spectrum Plus) to move Microchimp and his wheelbarrow across the screen to catch the correct letters falling from the top. The letters must be caught in the right order to spell the target word. After each word is correctly spelled, the child is rewarded with a tune, and the flower on the right of the screen grows one step further.

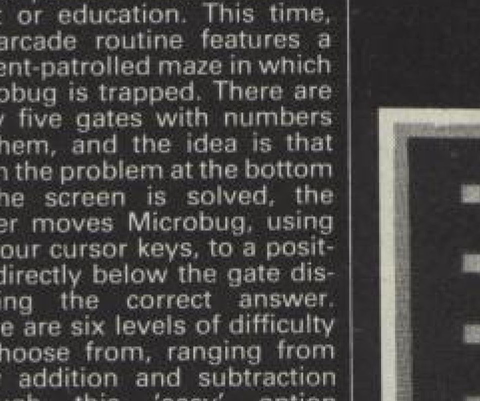
The children who tried this game for me didn't think much of it and rapidly lost interest. The game was not strong enough to retain their attention, and they soon gave up, claiming it was 'boring'. From an educational viewpoint, the program seemed to me to be extremely limited and totally lacking in flexibility. Spelling is taught most successfully when the words have some sort of context for the child — it would have been much better if the parent had been given the option of entering his or her choice of words for the child to spell, taken perhaps from a favourite book, or if the package had included some reading material which used the target words in context.

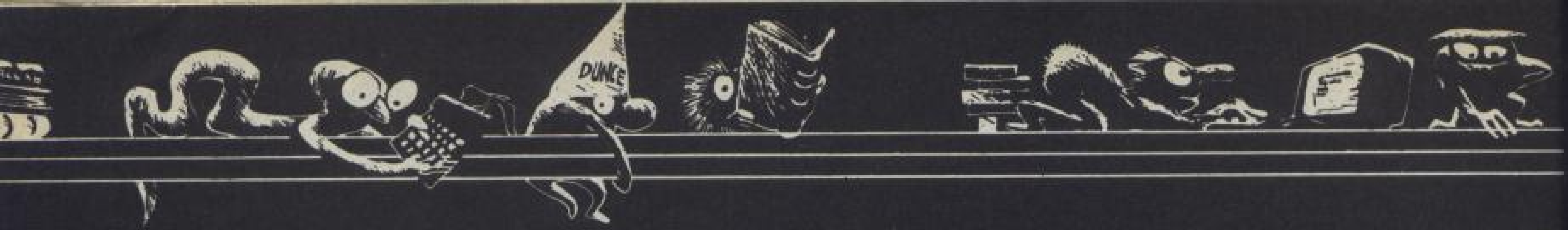
SUM SCRUNCHER



Obviously, educational software aimed at the 6 plus age group has to provide a fair amount of entertainment, but this game fails to provide much entertainment or education. This time, the arcade routine features a serpent-patrolled maze in which Microbug is trapped. There are thirty five gates with numbers on them, and the idea is that when the problem at the bottom of the screen is solved, the player moves Microbug, using the four cursor keys, to a position directly below the gate displaying the correct answer. There are six levels of difficulty to choose from, ranging from easy addition and subtraction (though this 'easy' option includes sums like 59 plus 4 and 47 plus 7) to difficult division as in 56 divided by 7.

A major flaw in the game is that the numbers displayed on the gates are all two digits — so 5 is represented as 05 — and Microbug has to be positioned extremely carefully, directly below and between the two digits, before the number is accepted. This game provides nothing more than mechanical, repetitive exercises and children are unlikely to want to play it again and again.

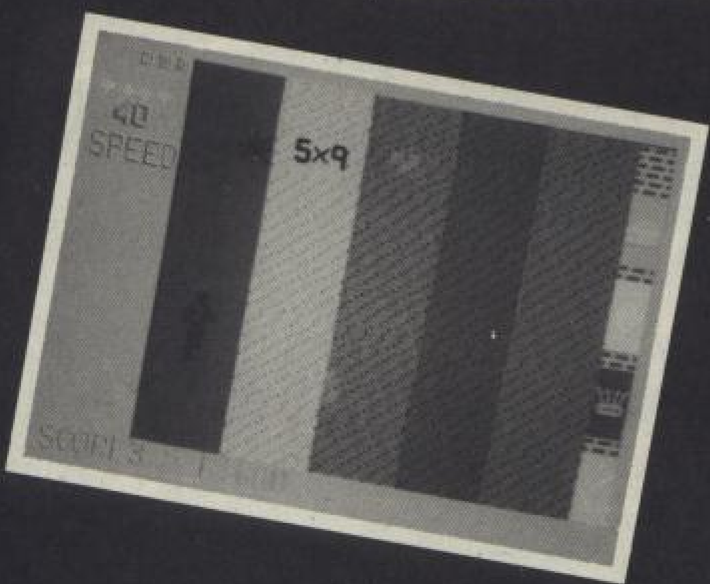




ROBOT RUNNER

Do you remember chanting out your tables at school? I certainly do (and I'm not that old!), though there was little emphasis on whether pupils actually understood what the recitations meant. *Robot Runner* gives children practice in the 2 to 9 multiplication tables. The player has to answer the sum correctly in order to move Robot Runner across the screen to retrieve the stolen treasure of Endor. There are, however, all sorts of obstacles to be avoided on the way. At the beginning, the menu allows you to choose which of the nine tables to practise — alternatively you can opt for a mixture. Instead of having to press the number keys for the correct answer, the player uses the two vertical cursors to increase or decrease the runner's speed to the number wanted. Certainly, the game element in this program is much more interesting than in *Sum Scruncher*, and the game is quite a useful way of reinforcing the tables.





HOT DOT SPOTTER

Hot Dot Spotter is a very simple number game. The player has to count the number of dots on a dropping ball and press the corresponding number key. The game starts fairly slowly, using low numbers, and as the player's skill improves the game becomes faster and more difficult. The scoring system is dependent on how quickly the correct key is pressed, and the notes tell us that 'seeing your score mount closer and closer to the High Score as you successfully catch each ball is a great thrill'. Unfortunately, my team of testers didn't seem to think so!

I'm afraid I found this game to be educationally sterile. There was little motivation for the player, and the number skills involved could have been practised to greater effect with dice and bits of cardboard.



General Rating

All of the programs are well error-trapped but, with the exception of *a,b,c . . . Lift Off!*, they have little of real merit to commend them. This isn't to say that they are bad programs, but simply that they are no better or worse than other educational software which relies mainly on an arcade format to sweeten the drill/practice pill. They all run well, however, and are easy enough to use, but are lacking in flexibility and, generally speaking, belong more to the education system of the past than to the computer age.

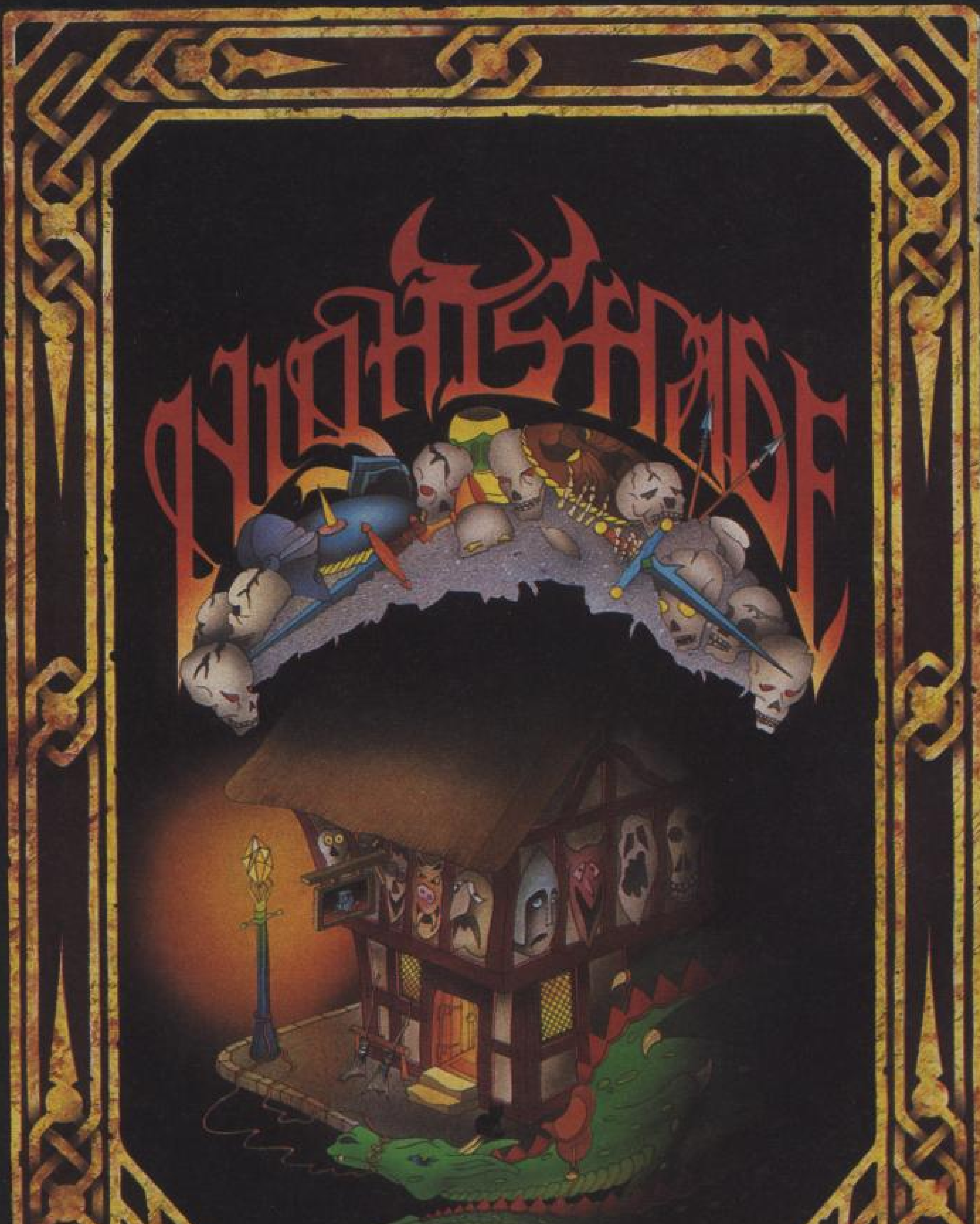
The programs all cost £7.95 and will run on the 16 or 48K Spectrum.

● **Next month, I'll be looking at an outstandingly good series of early learning programs from** Five Ways, **entitled** *The Learning Box*.

A Roundup Of The Results. .

Title	Educational Aim	Age Range	Control Keys	Use of Colour	Graphics
A, B, C, Lift Off!	letter/word recognition	4—8	all letter keys used; S to snap	bright & attractive	in the letter recognition section, the pictures are rather small and a large part of the screen is unused
Wild Words	spelling	6 and over	H to see the word again, then cursor keys	good	uninspiring
Hot Dot Spotter	number skills	4—8	number keys only	limited	very dull
Count About	addition and subtraction	4—8	number keys only	good	good
Sum Scruncher	number skills	6 and over	cursor keys only	bright and clear	reasonably good
Robot Runner	multiplication	6 and over	cursor keys only	attractive	fairly good

48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



"NIGHTSHADE" recommended retail price £9.95 inc VAT.
Available from W.H.SMITHS, BOOTS, J.MENZIES, WOOLWORTHS
and all good software retail outlets. Also available from
ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME, The Green, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE6 5JU
(P&P are included) Tel: 0530 411485

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

Producer: US Gold
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Softstone**

First produced for the Commodore 64 by Epyx, *Impossible Mission* was a game which some C64 owners used to advantage in the arguments about whether their computer or the Spectrum was the better games machine. Now there's a Spectrum version of the game, published by US Gold, which follows the action of the original very closely — although the sound effects have suffered in translation.

You play the role of a crack secret agent on a mission to save the world from the evil doings of the ultimate hacker. A mad professor type, Elvin Atombender, has accessed all the defence computers maintained by the superpowers, and is currently trying to puzzle out the codes which will set off a missile attack so huge that the whole globe will be destroyed.

Elvin has amassed a fortune from hacks into computers run by banks and financial institutions and has contstructed a massive underground complex patrolled by a variety of robot guards.The game is played against the clock — starting at noon, you have a mere six hours of game time in which to penetrate the madman's underground lair, discover his security code and penetrate his control centre.

Each room within the complex has several levels, or platforms, on which items of furniture and computer equipment are to be found. Small one-person lifting platforms may be used to access the different levels within each chamber, and the thirty two rooms in the complex are linked by a network of tunnels and lift shafts.

Elvin has a computer system which monitors the entire complex — at least one terminal on this system is found in every room. If you have the appropriate password, it is possible to temporarily deactivate the robots in that room so that passage through it is much simpler. Alternatively, you may wish to use a terminal to reset the lifting platforms to their starting position in the room. Accessing a terminal is simple — just approach it and push forward on the joystick which causes it to display a menu screen. Without the appropriate password, however a terminal will not accept input...

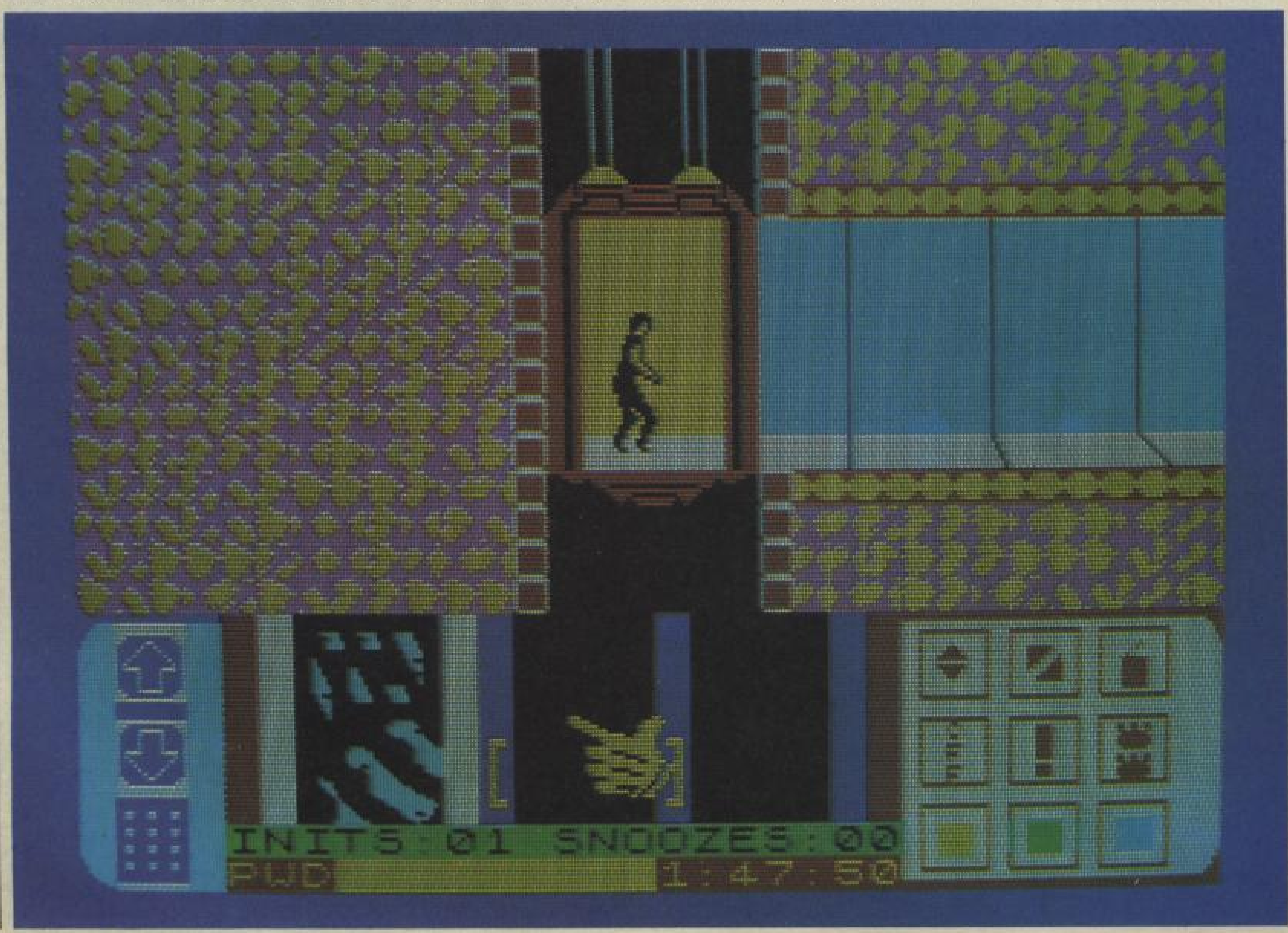
The platform reset and robot 'snooze' passwords can be found by searching the pieces of furniture and equipment scattered around the rooms. The password to the control room is only revealed once thirty six pieces which make up nine puzzles have been collected and assembled — puzzle pieces are also concealed in the objects.

Searching a piece of equipment is easy: you just approach it and push forward on the joystick whereupon a window appears on the screen with a bar graph display which diminishes as you search. Some objects can be searched very quickly, others take some while. If you break off a search, perhaps beacause a robot is approaching, it can be resumed where you left off so long as you don't leave the room. Once the search is complete the window reveals what has (or hasn't) been found.

The defence robots all look the same, but behave according to different programmed patterns. Some of them can fire a deadly electrical charge, others can home in on your agent; most of them patrol a section of catwalk, moving up and down its length. Contact with a robot loses you ten minutes of game time, as does a fall through the bottom of a chamber. Certain items can only be searched when the robots have been disabled, and a strategic approach is neccessary if you are to complete the mission — a finite number of 'snooze' and platform reset passwords is available.

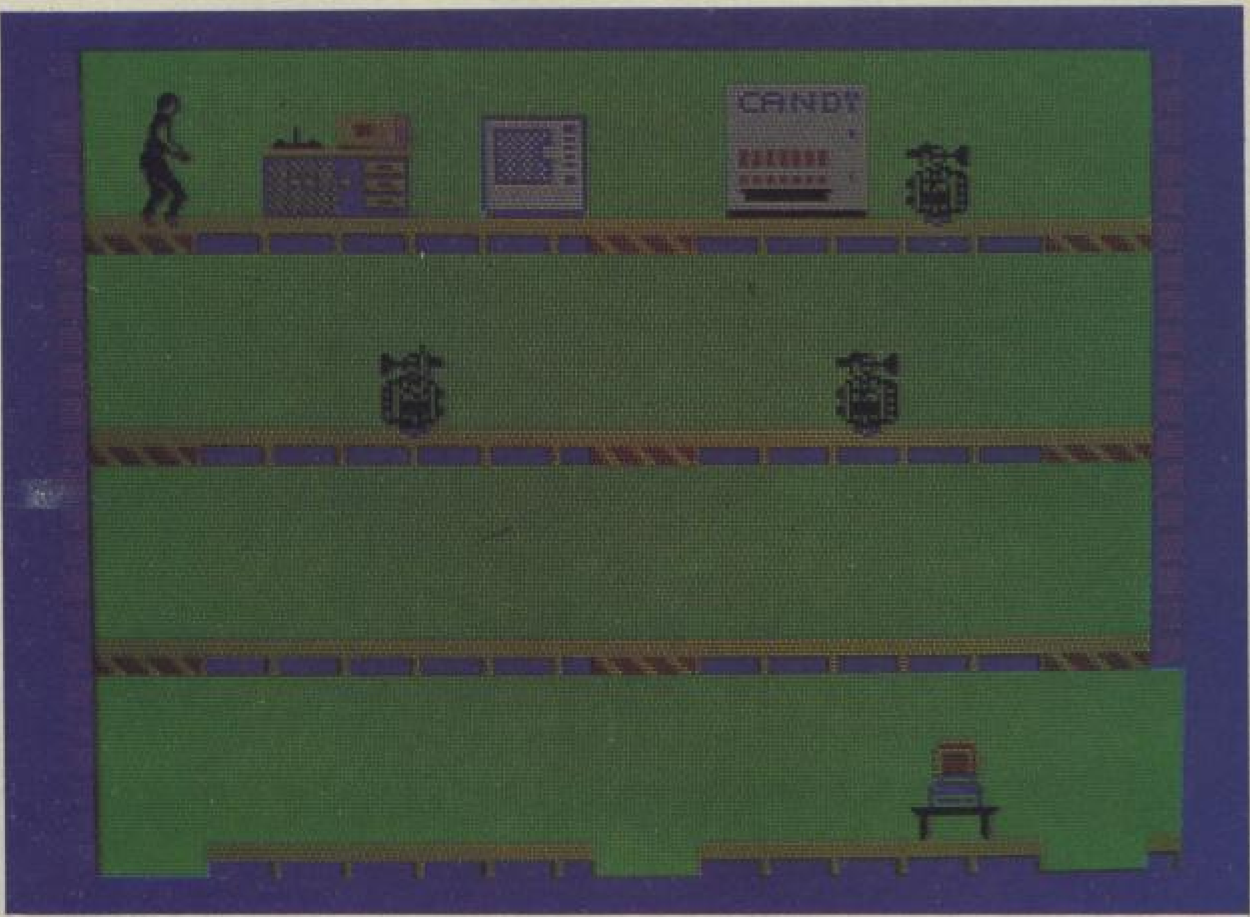
The mission would be truly impossible were it not for your portable computer. This machine keeps track of the rooms you have passed through, giving you a constantly updated map of the complex which includes a marker for your current position. Your computer can also be used to help assemble puzzle pieces — pressing the fire button while you are in the lift causes the map display to be replaced with an icon-driven menu screen.

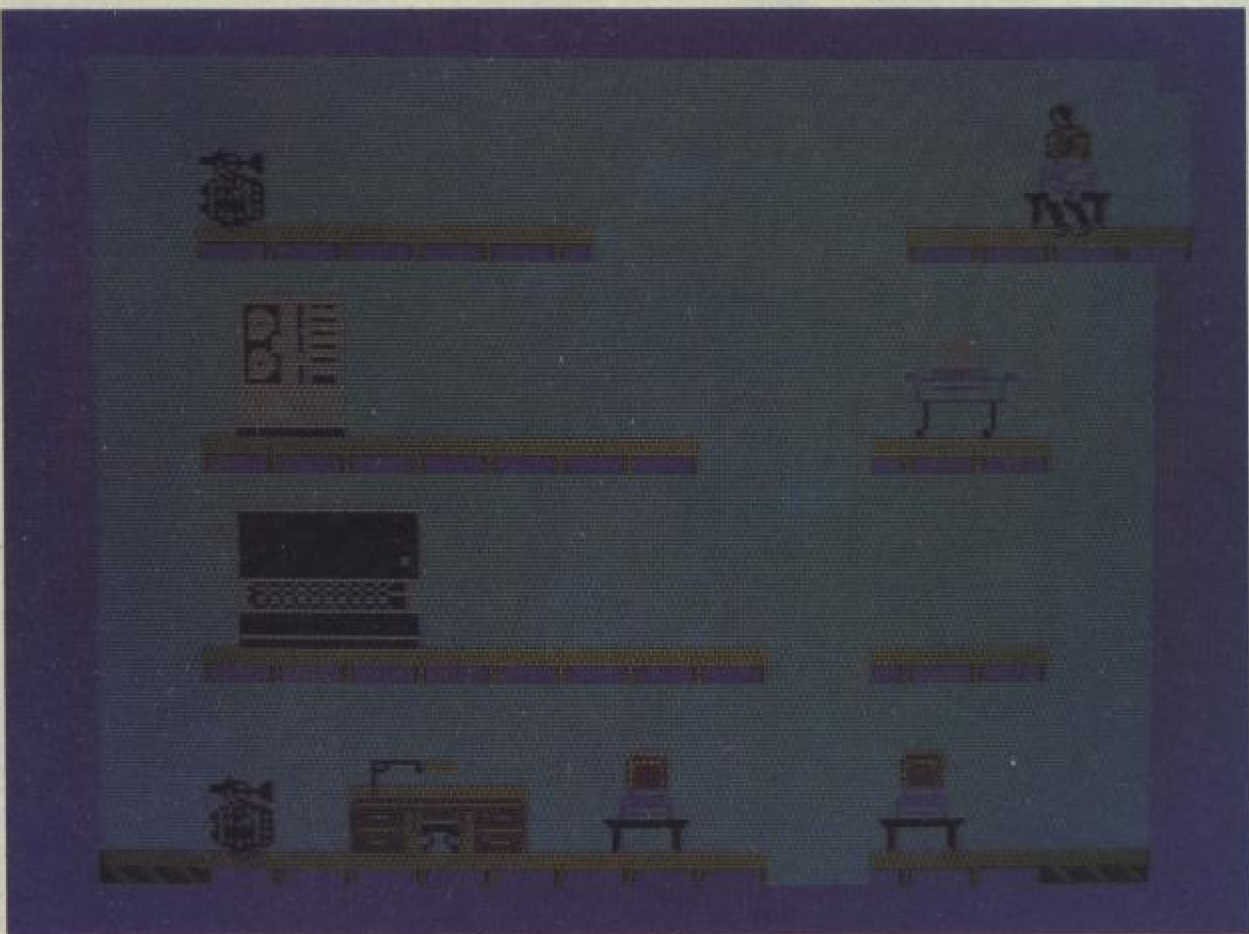
Whenever you find a piece of the main puzzle, it is committed to your computer's memory. You can manipulate these puzzle components through the icon driven display, moving them from memory into a work area and flipping them over horizontally and vertically and changing their colour. It is also possible to dial up the computer at your base to ask for on-line assistance in solving the puzzles — but this costs you two min-





Ocean House · 6 Central Street · Manchester · M2 5NS · Telephone 061 832 6633 · Telex 669977 Oceans G





utes of game time per call.
Each completed puzzle consists of four elements and there are nine puzzles in all. Each time you solve a puzzle you are rewarded with one of the letters in the evil Elvin's master password. Once you are in possession of all nine letters of the control room access code, you may enter, thwart the madman's plan and save the world from destruction.
Saving the world brings a bonus of 1000 points, with one point added to your score for every second remaining on the game clock when you enter the control room. If you don't actually save the world, you still get points for finding puzzle pieces and passwords as well as for solving each of the nine puzzles.

CRITICISM

● **'I didn't think Impossible Mission would survive the conversion from C64 to Spectrum but it seems to be more or less the same. Graphically, this platform game is good — although there are a few gliches. The sound is obviously not as good as the C64 version but it is quite well used all the same. The various types of droid all look the same, so you don't know what to expect when you sneak up behind one to search an object. My main niggle is that you have to be exactly lined up on a lift platform before you can move it up or down. Generally I'd recommend** Impossible Mission **as it is a very playable.'**

● *'The Spectrum conversion of* Impossible Mission, *as might be expected, falls down on sound. The realistic, fading scream as your agent falls into one of the pits in the floor of a room is totally absent — not a squeak on the Spectrum. The sound of his footsteps and the main lift is also disappointing when compared to the Commodore version. Otherwise the game is a very faithful conversion. It is, however, a bit of a pain to play. While your agent scampers around, somersaulting and jumping with glee, using the lifting platforms is a pest. You have to position your man very precisely for them to work which makes life that bit more difficult. A couple of buglets seem to have crept in too — on one screen you can somersault through the platform above you for instance. Overall a good game, and one which is much more than a platform jumping game. Joystick skills as well as brainpower are needed to save the world in this one. Annoyingly frustrating, it's quite addictive'*

● '*Impossible Mission* is a classic Commodore game because of its ace graphics, sound, brilliant game content and speech. I wondered how the Spectrum version would compare with the 64 version as I loaded it in. I didn't wonder for very long - a few minutes play soon decided that. The graphics are pretty murky with heaps of attribute problems and the animation isn't anywhere as good as the CBM's, it's pretty slow and jerky. The sound is pretty reasonable for a Spectrum game but the game has no speech which made the original game something really special. All the other original features of the game are here and the game plays fairly similarly, apart from the control being unresponsive and the difficulty in judging a jump. I suppose I've been spoilt by playing the 64 version but I still think it could've been improved upon . . . never mind though - it's still *Impossible Mission*.

COMMENTS

Control keys: CAPS left, Z right, P up, L down, B-SPACE fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: average
Use of colour: not inspired, problems with the animated figures
Graphics: straightforward. Can be confusing when the agent is searching
Sound: footsteps and effects for robots and lifts, but no speech synthesis
Skill levels: one
Screens: thirty two rooms, plus corridors and portable computer display
General rating: a passable conversion from the Commodore original

Use of computer	**78%**
Graphics	**75%**
Playability	**67%**
Getting started	**73%**
Addictive qualities	**71%**
Value for money	**74%**
Overall	**76%**


NEW LABEL
NEW TITLE
ANNOUNCING
Rockfords
RIOT!
& Boulder Dash
• Two great games for the price of one!
• For one or two players
MONOLITH
Leading Edge Software
SPECTRUM VERSION
AVAILABLE LATE AUGUST

The rustle of dinner jacketed sleeve against baize .... the click as the white ball nudges against the red, urging it on a journey towards the pocket .... the Daz whiteness of the referee's gloves as they polish the pink ball before returning to its rightful place on the table. Isn't Snooker wonderful?

Crash Competition

WHAT A GENTLEMANLY GAME....

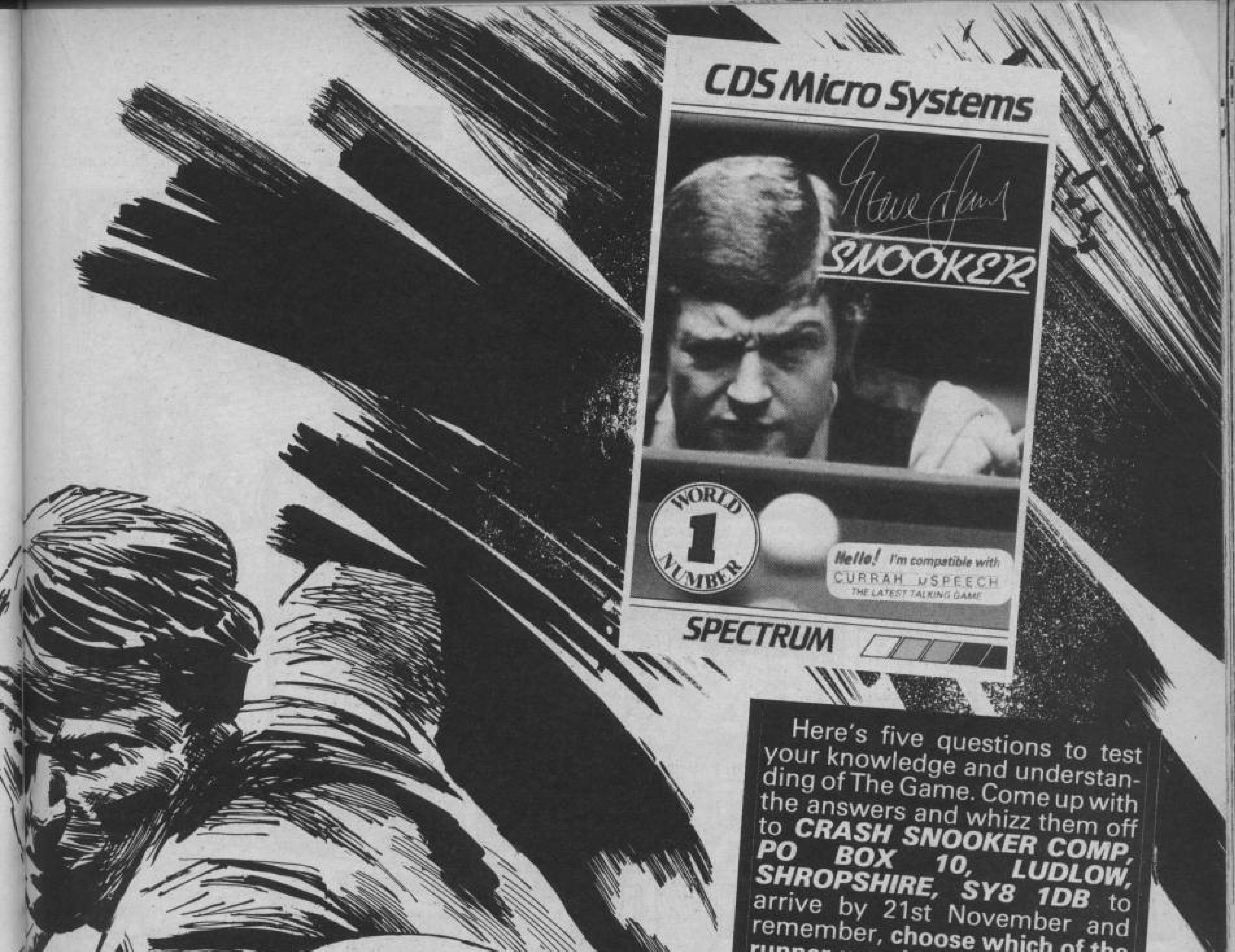
WIN TWO TICKETS TO THE FINAL DAY OF THE MERCANTILE CREDIT CHAMPIONSHIPS!



CDS launched *Steve Davis Snooker* on the Spectrum at the end of last year – and it's still selling well. The game brings all the excitement of the table onto your Spectrum screen and allows you, if you so wish, to pit your talents against Steve and his magic table technique.

I remember how Mummy Minion would moan on when she found out that I'd stopped by the snooker hall on the way home from school to watch the lads pot a few on the baize. 'Winge, moan complain', she'd go when I got home, 'Gibber Gibber. Snooker equals wasted youth son, get your head into those schoolbooks'.

All the fuss she made about young folks hanging around in snooker halls — anyone would think a fellow couldn't make a living playing snooker! I mean, look at those chaps on the TV screen, they must be coining it in! No, Mummy Minion, you advised me wrong. All that book-learnin' and look where I ended up: Competition Minion. I'm off down the snooker hall to practise my cueing ....



Here's five questions to test your knowledge and understanding of The Game. Come up with the answers and whizz them off to ***CRASH SNOOKER COMP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB*** to arrive by 21st November and remember, **choose which of the runner-up prizes you would like to win!**

1) How many red balls fit in the triangle? a) 17 b) 16 c) 15 d) 14

2) Who is Steve Davis' manager? a) Barry Heard b) Barry Hearn c) Harry Burns d) Harry Krishna

3) How old was Steve Davis when he first won the World Championship? a)22 b)21 c)23 d) 24

4) Who is Steve's doubles partner? a) Tony Knowles b) Terry Griffiths c) Tony Meo d) Jimmy White

5) Steve Davis won the Coral UK Championships last year. True or False?

CDS have sponsored this little competition in honour of the impending anniversary of their snooker game – and there are some really first rate prizipoos on offer. Top Prize is **a pair of tickets to the final day of the Mercantile Credit Championships** – which will be held on 12th January next year in Warrington. These tickets are already like gold-dust, but there's more: Five runner-up prizes are also on offer. Five lucky CRASH winners will be able to choose between a Steve Davis video, an autographed cue, a signed Steve Davis autobiography, a T shirt or a Sweatshirt. Fifteen runners up will receive their very own copy of the game itself.


ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME
PRESENT
JETMAN
OUR HE... ER... MY HERO.. OHUM.. ER HIM HERE, HAS BORROWED A SHIP TO RETURN TO EARTH, BUT THE SHIP WAS A DISGUISED DONGLE BOMB PLANTED BY THE ALIENS WHO HAVE A SECRET WEAPON UNDER THEIR KILTS... EEE!
DONGLE
ACK!
HIM HERE, BEING AT THE VERY CENTRE OF THE BLAST IS UNSCATHED, BUT THE REST OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF EARTH, NEAR MIDDLESBROUGH, IS SCATHED DEEF... THAT IS DEEF AS IN "LOOK OUT!" "WHAT?"..."OUCH"... AN' LIKE THAT!
WHO SAID THAT...?
WAA...?
WAA..?
EH?
CHEE-YARGE!
YAH!
WHEE!
HOOT
STONE ME! IT'S THOSE NASTY ALIENS WHO CONNED ME! THEY'RE INVADING US! LOOK OUT! LOOK OUT! HOO! RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY! WHEEE!
WAA..?
EH?
WO?
HAH! WE MEET AGAIN, EARTH-LOONY! THANKS TO YOUR STUPIDITY WE NOW RULE THE WHOLE EARTH NEAR MIDDLESBROUGH! YOUR POPULATION IS AS DEEF AS A POST AN' I'M THE BOSS!
HOW'JA LIKE THEM APPLES?
HAH!
WHO?
EH?
WOT?
HOO-HAH!
US EARTH-LOONYS DON'T GIVE IN THAT EASY! JUST BEING A BIT DEEF WON'T STOP US FROM BOPPING YOU LOT, YOU BET!
ARRR!
WOT?
WOT HE SAY...?
OH, NO? WATCH THIS!
EH?
SPEAK UP...
SNORT!
SNIGGER!
DONGLE!
WORKS EVERY TIME! NOW WE WON'T EVEN HAVE TO USE OUR UNDER-KILT WEAPON...
OW! OW!
OW!
ME LUGS!
MY EARS
OW!
PITTA
PATTA
PITTA
PAT
... WILL WE?
NOPE!
AS FOR YOU, LOONY! YOU ARE DOOMED TO WANDER AMONGST YOUR OWN KIND AND SUFFER THEIR SCORN! AFTER ALL, IT WAS YOU THAT BOMBED 'EM!
DONGLE DONGLE
POO!
OW OW
SCORN!
I FINK I'LL ASK MY FABULOUS 'EYE OF OKTUP' WHAT'S TO DO!
YAH-BOO, TRAITOR!
MAYBE THE FUTURE WILL LOOK A LITTLE ROSIER...
UGLY, UGLY, UGLY..
DONGLE!
SHRIEK!!
NOW, LET'S SEE...
NORMAL SERVICE WILL BE RESUMED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...
POOT!
WAAHOOTIE? OKTUP'S EYE ON THE BLINK? OUR HERO BRANDED TRAITOR? ALIENS IN CHARGE?... NEX' MUNF!

ON THE RUN



SPECTRUM 48K £6.90

Selected Design Design titles are available from:-

Boots **WOOLWORTH** John Menzies
COMET WHSMITH

and all leading software stockists, or direct from:-

Design Design

Design Design Software,
125 Smedley Road, Cheetham Hill, Manchester M8 7RS
Trade enquiries:— 061 205 6603
Price includes p & p

PLAYING TIPS from ROBIN CANDY

It's October 1st which means it is intro time again. Once again I will make an appeal for more pokes for the Christmas Special which is becoming more ominous by the day. Because of the gap in schedules created by the PCW show (by the time you read this it was quite a while ago) my post didn't get looked at for a couple of weeks, so now I've got hundreds of letters to wade through just to find those choice tips. Speaking of choice tips I am looking in particular for hints on Gargoyle's Marsport (which is very good and worth buying if you liked their previous games) and for Elite from Firebird.

My already huge workload has been increased by the powers that be, who have now forced me to write the Playing Tips column for AMTIX! (the Amstrad mag) but at least it's still NOT Commodore. I just hope they remember to increase my (meagre) wages accordingly and grant me a new logo for the CRASH playing tips. The good news is that I've now got my chair back, so no need to worry there. (*Who was? — GK*).

Many people have moaned that tips that they sent in are credited to different people. This is not so, because many people send in the same information and at different times. For example a couple of months ago I asked for more Frank Bruno's Boxing codes but by the time the information was printed I already had them. Another thing is that I only print tips when they are sent to me (unless I find them myself) so this means that the game must have been out a while for the tips to be sent in. One last point. Please don't send in any more Frank Bruno's Boxing codes.



WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

Steve Taylor of Frampton West and Ben Stone of CRASH Towers give the lowdown on how to thrash your opponent in Melbourne House's classic martial arts program.

To make progress you must first of all become familiar with all the moves and how to execute them — this is best done in the two player mode. It shouldn't take long before you are competent at this. The roundhouse and flying kick are fancy moves but not very practical. On the Novice and 1st Dan levels you may get away with performing them but later the computer opponent becomes too clever to fall for them.

By far the best move to perform is the forward or backward sweep but if it is mistimed then the computer will get you with a jab kick. A good tactic is to move towards your opponent and then do a forward somersault over his head and quickly perform a backward sweep. Should he be just out of range then do a half roundhouse and run after him then kick him in the back. It may not be cricket but it is effective.

From the 1st Dan walk forward so that you are near enough to perform a high kick then do it and the computer player will block the kick. While he is doing this do a middle or jab kick and you will knock him over. This works up to the 5th dan. On the higher levels it is best to play safe and just get in front on points then avoid the computer player until the time runs out. This may not gain points but it does move you up levels.









Want to keep in touch? Use databases, electronic mail, bulletin boards, viewtext? Download the latest super software from Prestel*? Now you can, with your 48K Spectrum*, a suitable modem and the DATASPECTRUM modem interface and software package from Miracle Technology.

DATASPECTRUM fits straight into the Spectrum edge connector and handles baud rates of 300/300, 1200/75 and 75/1200. Software features include Mailbox Editor, Frame Processor, Save, Print and Telesoftware Downloader.

The Dataspectrum Package, including interface, cable, cassette and full User Guide costs only £39.95 exc (£47.09 inc VAT & UK P/P). It's available now – so get in touch!

Please send me

☐ DATASPECTRUM packages @ £47.09 inc VAT + UK P/P.

☐ I enclose cheque/postal order

☐ charge my Access/Visa card no:

. . . .

expiry date . . . . / . . . . / . . . .

Name . . . .

Address . . . .

. . . . Postcode . . . .

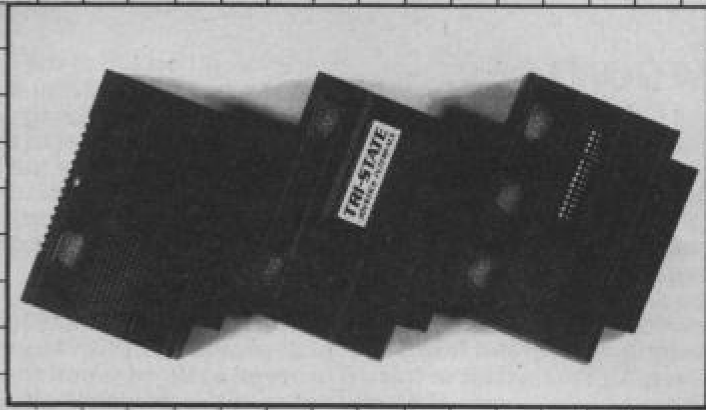
send to:
Spectrum Support 5, Miracle Technology (UK) Ltd, St Peters Street, Ipswich IP1 1XB.
Tel 0473-216141.

*reg'd trade marks of the companies concerned

DATA-SPECTRUM PUTS YOU IN TOUCH!

MIRACLE TECHNOLOGY

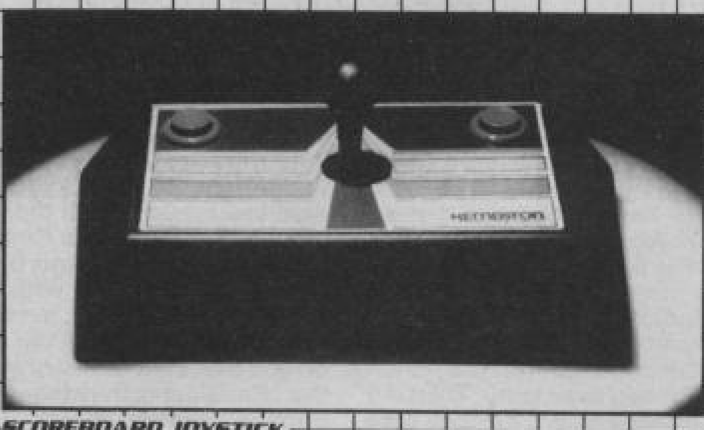
KEMPSTON MICRO ELECTRONICS LTD



JOYSTICK INTERFACE, TRI-STATE + PRO JOYSTICK INTERFACES



FORMULA 1·2 JOYSTICKS.



SCOREBOARD JOYSTICK.

ORDER FORM

Available direct from Kempston Micro Electronics Fast mail order service Please send me the following

☐ Formula One Joystick	£16.95	☐ Joystick Interface	£9.95
☐ Formula Two Joystick	£11.95	☐ **TRI-STATE** Joystick Interface	£12.95
☐ **SCOREBOARD** Joystick	£19.95	☐ Pro Joystick Interface	£16.95

SPECIAL COMBINATION OFFER

☐ Formula One Joystick + Joystick Interface £19.95

☐ Formula Two Joystick + Joystick Interface £17.50

Name

Address

All prices include VAT and Postage and Packing. Overseas order add £4.00 pp. Please allow up to 14 days for delivery

I enclose a cheque for £

Access/Barclaycard

Kempston Micro Electronics Ltd 1-3 Singer Way Kempston Bedford
Tel (0234) 856633

PLAYING TIPS

DRAGONTORC

This is the final installment of the Dragontorc solution which, over the past several months, has been a regular feature in the playing tips. As of next month I will be diverting my attentions to Hewson's latest fab game, Astroclone. So without further ado, on with the final bit of this fab game.

The cursed crypt is the last place you will have to go to to get a crown to destroy. To get there go to Torhenge. The woods are uninhabited but a goblin patrol has found a chest there. Use mantle to protect yourself from the Demon's spells.

Find the rabbit and place him down the hole to get the key. Now find the chest which you should unlock using the key you just obtained. Take the Ankh symbol from the chest and go back and get the rabbit. Find the single hole and place the rabbit down it; avoid the snake. Take the spell from the hole. Now take the rabbit to the carrots to reveal the flagstone. Use the Ankh to move it. Go down the hole with the cursed key and the Ankh symbol. The torch is useful.

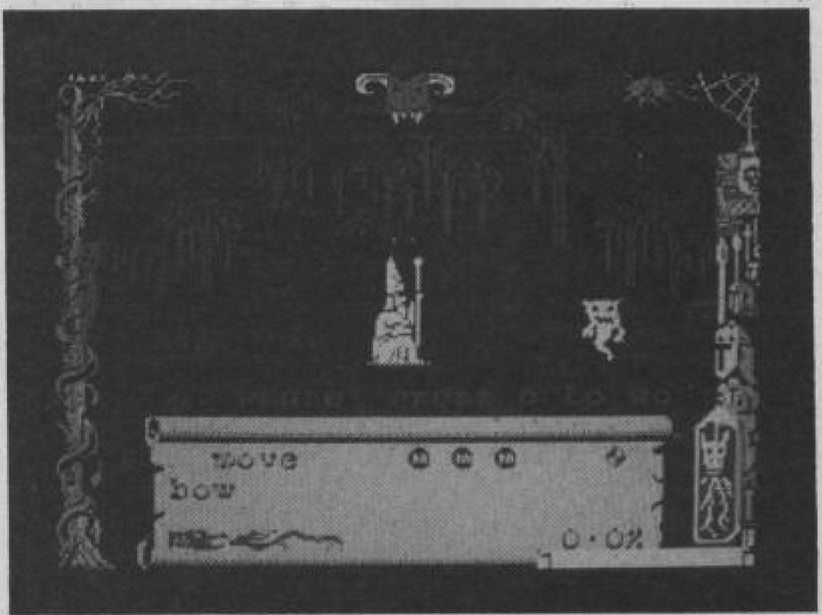
The underground is inhabited by wraiths that can be destroyed using the bane spell. In the room with the Ankh symbol fixed to the wall, put your Ankh symbol on the wall to stop the Skelebones appearing. The symbol changes and falls to the floor, take it. Do the same process of matching symbols in another room to stop the Skelebones appearing. This will also make a crown symbol, take this. Match the crown symbol with the crown symbol on the wall to reveal the exit.

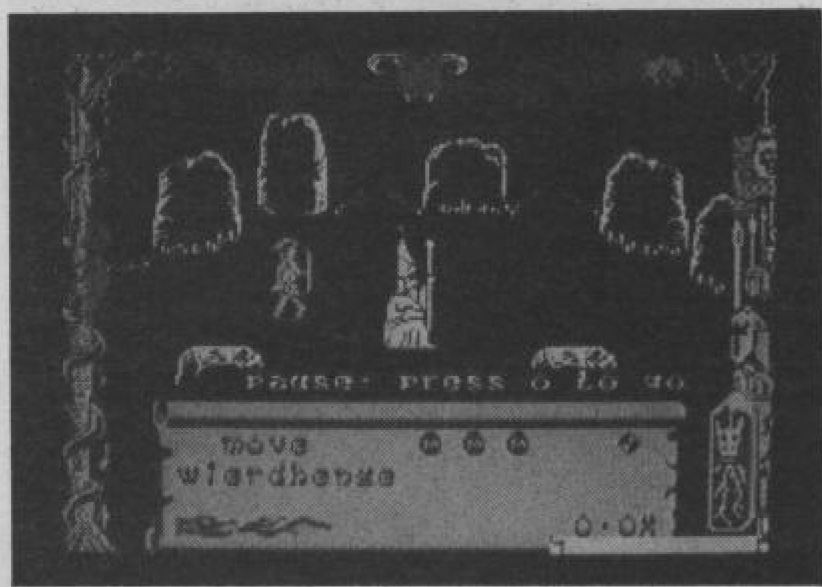
The cursed key opens many of the locked doors in the cursed crypt. Beware of the invisible snakes that become visible when they touch you; use heal if they bite or Mantle to protect yourself from them. Take the small blue and open the blue chests to get a spell and a doorkey. Using the doorkey open the locked door that leads to a room with 3 wraiths in it. Use bane to kill the wraiths and use the doorkey to open the door at the other end of the room. Keep bane on and search the tombs for spells. Search the tombs with the crown symbol to get the crown but avoid the crown that drops. Take the crown to the anvil and destroy it. Now place the crystal of antithought on top of the magic to get the message 'Now crystal can tame 5 legged Morag's Bane'. Take the crystal to the Cursed crypt and tame the hand with it (just touch the hand with the crystal of antithought). Leave the gem behind and take the hand.

With 4 of the crowns destroyed you are ready for the final showdown with Morag so proceed to Wyrmwood the realm of the shapeshifter. This area is inhabited by any evil creature that Morag has summoned to her cause.

Search all the woods, pools leaves etc with the servant to get spells and elf gems. Find the elves and give the gems to them — you will get a torch, key and missile spell in return. Use the key to open the chest and get the Detect spell. Light the torch on the goblin fire and use it to kill the snakes. Beware of the flying cube that transports you back to the stone circle. You must decoy it otherwise it will be waiting for you. Use the goblin's key to open the chest to get a bow and a doorkey. Give the bow to the last elf. Open the locked door with the door key (beware of the cube and remember to kill the snake). Kill at least one of the goblins inside the citadel to persuade the elves to follow you. Lead the elves into the goblins to preserve your missiles; the elves will kill the goblins for you. Unlock the next locked door with the door key and lead the elves through but beware of the magic balls. Unlock the next door with the same key, kill the bat, avoid the magic ball and unlock the door on the left. Two of the rooms on the citadel have invisible goblins guarding chests. Use the detect spell to show them. The elves still can't see the goblins so you will have to lead them together to destroy them. Take the key and open both of the chests. Take the pentagram symbol and the Undo spell from inside the chests. In a room there is a pentagram symbol on the floor place your symbol on top of it to reveal a decoy cube that takes you outside of the citadel. Leave the symbol and key here.

Beware of the Demon who takes away Maroc's ability to open doors. Use the Mantle spell to protect yourself and the missile spell to destroy it. Demons can sometimes kill elves and vice versa. The way to Morag is past a room with a flashing imp in it. Don't touch it otherwise you will be transported back outside the citadel. Lead the elves into the final complex. Try to destroy the skelebones and demons yourself because they might kill the elves. Find the pool to replenish your energy. Find the green key and put it on the floor, now put the lit torch near it and snakes will come out. Kill the snakes with the torch. Now use Undo on the key and open the chest with it. Take the white key from the chest but leave the symbol there for later. Unlock the locked door with the white key and lead the goblins away from Morag's protection so that the elves can deal with them. Beware of the invisible spider, kill him with the Missile spell or with an elf. Now you should be in Morag's room.





Here use the Slow or Unseen spells. Place the hand on top of the crown just above Morag's head. The crown will drop down, take it along with the wand and go left. Use Bane to kill the wraiths. Place the wand on top of the fireball generator and it will turn to a door key. Take the door key. Open the door to the snake room and kill all the snakes with the lit torch. In this room find a chest using the wand and open it with the green key. Use the wand to turn of the snakes and magic, now take the Mindkey spell from inside the chest. Take the wand, crown and pentagram symbol back to the room with the exit cube and the other pentagram symbol. Leave the pentagram symbol there. Open the next door with the Mindkey spell. Use the small yellow key from the invisible goblin room to open the chest but beware! Axes fly out. Use the wand to switch the axes off. Now take the Pentagram symbol from inside the chest. Place one symbol on top of the cube and missiles fly out. Place another one on and the cube reappears. Go down the cube taking the crown.

You will no be at Cairndoom which is the final set of locations. Open the doors with the mindkey. Deal with the goblin, dwarf and demon guards using the missile and warrior spell, then look for a room with a giant stone in it. Use the Mindkey on this stone and Merlin is revealed. Now give merlin the last crown to end the game.

FRANKIE

After using last month's and this month's tips I can now get 98% but I'm having trouble getting that last 1%, can anyone help? Thanks to S. Longstaff and M. Mochan the wonders of the ZTT and other rooms have been revealed.

THE ZTT ROOM

There are two methods to get past the bullets. You can wear the flak jacket and shoot away the wall but the second method is easier, especially if you have no jacket. Move to the far left of the room and start shooting. Miraculously the wall will be shot away even though you aren't facing it. If you complete the puzzle you can go to the shooting gallery or you can go to talking heads if you press one of the three buttons at the bottom of the screen.

TALKING HEADS

This is quite a simple game to complete. Just shoot out the top blocks and shoot through them until you have to move to avoid being shot. Then move to the bottom of the screen and quickly back to the top and start shooting. By alternating between the top of the screen and the bottom it is possible to slowly chip the Russian's points away.

SEA OF HOLES

This room is more frustrating than anything so just persevere and you will finally complete after a bit of practice.

RAID OVER MERSEYSIDE

To complete this game just aim your gun near the top or middle of the screen and keep the streams of bullets coming out. It shouldn't be to much hassle to get through without losing any pleasure points.

THE SHOOTING GALLERY

When you have shot at your target it is possible to save time but pressing the firebutton again even though the booklet says you have to go to the bottom of the screen.

THE MURDER MYSTERY

This is very easy because it is always Mr Straight but before you can reveal this you must first find all 23 clues.

POKES CORNER

This month's pokes section is all thanks to the generous help of Paul Stephenson, one of the competition winners a few issues back. Once more, I will make a plea for pokes to appear in the Christmas Special. It doesn't matter whether they are for old games. All I'm asking for are original pokes. So hurry up and get your fingers walking through someone else's code and you may win a T shirt

TANK DUEL

This program provides infinite lives. Just type in the program (save it to tape for future use) and start the tape from the start.

```
1 REM TANK DUEL POKES
2 CLEAR 65505
5 PRINT AT 10,5; "START TANK DUEL TAPE"
10 FOR F = 65506 TO 65535:
READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
20 DATA 221, 33, 0, 64, 17, 54, 191
30 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5
40 DATA 48, -15, 175, 50, 111, 200
50 DATA 42, 89, 92, 54, 247
60 DATA 35, 54, 13, 195, 180, 18
70 RANDOMIZE USR 65506
```

FIRST BLOCK LOADS INTO SCREEN

RAID OVER MOSCOW

If you are having problems with this game then type in this listing and start the tape from the beginning and you may find the game a bit easier.

```
1 REM RAID OVER MOSCOW
10 CLEAR 65535: POKE 65535,195
20 PRINT AT 9,6; "PLAY TAPE FROM THE START"
30 FOR F = 45043 TO 45081:
READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
40 DATA 245, 229, 58, 239, 95, 254
50 DATA 63, 32, 15, 237 86, 237, 71
60 DATA 33, 107, 107, 34, 230, 96
70 DATA 62, 62, 50, 217, 96, 62, 147
80 DATA 50, 212, 96, 195, 58, 0, 62
90 DATA 59, 237, 71, 237, 94, 201
100 RANDOMIZE USR 45075
110 MERGE "": LOAD ""
```

After loading, the program will return to basic in an alternative character set. Now type in the set of pokes of your choice as direct commands.

```
POKE 29252, 183 FOR INFINITE LIVES
POKE 40299, 182
POKE 43364, 182
POKE 46507, 182
POKE 49130, 182
POKE 43369, 182 FOR INFINITE PLANES DURING THE ATTACK RUN AND MISSILE SILOS REGARDLESS OF PLANES TAKEN OUT OF HANGER
POKE 46512, 182
POKE 30414, 182 FOR INFINITE DISCS
POKE 37473, 174 BYPASS HANGER SCREEN
POKE 37474, 157
TO START THE GAME
RANDOMIZE USR 32768
```

TRASHMAN

Type in the program and start the tape from the beginning but don't worry when the program names don't appear on screen.

```
1 REM TRASHMAN POKES
10 PRINT AT 9, 2; "PLAY TRASHMAN TAPE FROM THE START"
20 POKE 23570,16: LOAD ""SCREEN$: LOAD ""CODE
30 POKE 59615, 251: POKE 59616, 195: POKE 59617, 3: POKE 59618, 19
40 POKE 23570, 6
```

ONCE LOADING FINISHED WILL RETURN TO BASIC NOW ENTER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING POKES

```
POKE 42528, 0 INFINITE ATTEMPTS
POKE 42444, 0 IF YOU RUN OUT OF ENERGY YOU PROGRESS TO THE NEXT SCREEN
POKE 42445, 0
POKE 42457, 0 IF YOU ARE HIT BY A CAR OR TRASH CART YOU GO TO THE NEXT SCREEN
POKE 42458, 0
POKE 42459, 0
POKE 52060, 201 WHEN THE BONUS REACHES ZERO IT LOOPS AROUND AGAIN TO 9999
POKE 49022, 24 IF YOU HIT A CAR YOU ONLY GET A LIMP
POKE 49017, 201 SO YOU CAN WALK THROUGH ANY MOVING OBJECT WITHOUT BEING AFFECTED BY IT.
POKE 48985, 201
```

WHEN ENTERED ENOUGH POKES THEN RANDOMIZE USR 20800 TO START GAME.

DEATH STAR INTERCEPTOR

This program gives you the choice of either infinite lives or immortality. Once again just type in the listing and start the tape from the beginning.

```
1 REM DEATH STAR POKES
10 PRINT AT 9, 5; "PLAY DEATH STAR"; AT 11, 10; "FROM START"
20 FOR F = 60000 TO 60055:
READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
30 RANDOMIZE USR 60000
100 DATA 221, 33, 203, 92, 17, 141
110 DATA 5, 175, 214, 1, 205, 86, 5
120 DATA 48, 241, 243, 33, 145, 234
130 DATA 17, 211, 96, 1, 7, 0, 237
140 DATA 176, 17, 92, 193, 213, 33
150 DATA 151, 97, 229, 225, 33, 253
160 DATA 94, 1, 0, 2, 62, 200, 237
170 DATA 79, 195, 151, 97
```

Now enter one of the following:

```
175 REM INFINITE LIVES
180 DATA 241, 0, 92, 221
190 DATA 92, 190, 195
```

```
175 REM IMMORTALITY
180 DATA 241, 0, 113, 221
190 DATA 92, 104, 195
```

FACTORY BREAKOUT

This is one of Steve Crow's earliest hits (he is the author of *Starquake*) but if you are still having problems with it then just type in this listing and start the tape from the beginning to make the game a bit easier.

```
1 REM FACTORY BREAKOUT POKES
10 CLEAR 29599
20 INPUT "NO. OF LIVES (1-32767)?"; A
30 IF A < 1 OR A > 32767 THEN GOTO 20
40 LET B = INT (A/256): LET A = A — B * 256
50 FOR F = 29000 TO 29040:
READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
60 DATA 221, 33, 0, 91, 17, 196
70 DATA 9, 205, 105, 113, 48, 244
80 DATA 221, 33, 160, 115, 17, 96
90 DATA 140, 205, 105, 113, 48, 244
100 DATA 33, A, B, 34, 230, 118, 195
110 DATA 160, 115, 175, 214, 1, 8
120 DATA 243, 195, 108, 5
130 POKE 23570, 16
140 PRINT AT 9,6; "START BREAKOUT TAPE"
150 POKE 29597, 113: POKE 29596, 72
160 LOAD "" SCREEN$
```

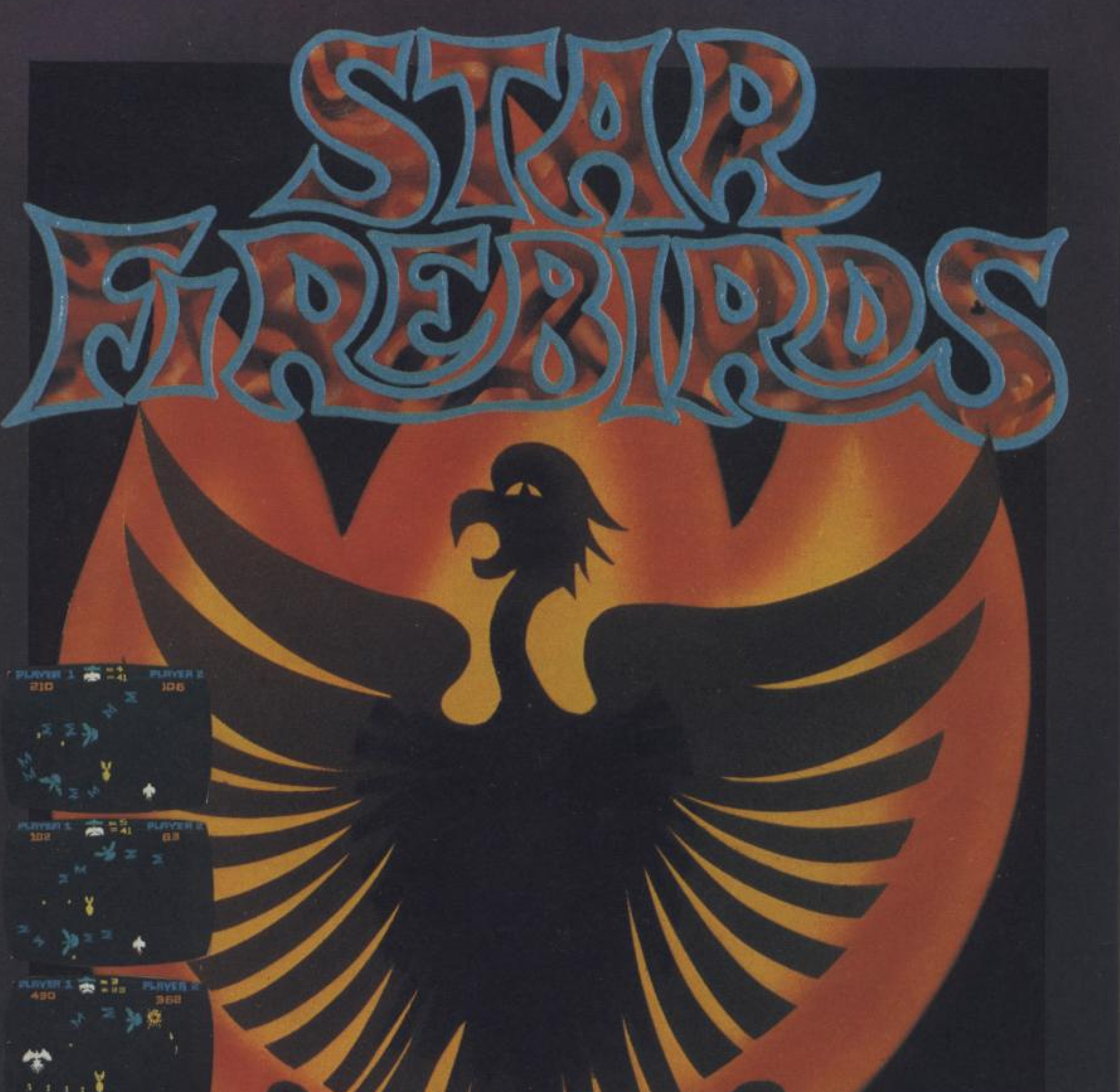
LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

This must be one of the most unlikely games to provide pokes for but thanks to P. Stephenson it is now possible to have immediate access to all the available characters and be able to walk through Dragons etc without being killed.

```
1 REM MIDNIGHT POKES
10 CLEAR 65535: POKE 23570, 16
20 PRINT AT 9,6; "START MIDNIGHT TAPE"
30 LOAD ""CODE 16384
40 FOR F = 23317 TO 23334:
READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
50 DATA 33, 0, 0, 34, 99, 253
60 DATA 34, 14, 8, 96, 33, 24, 62
70 DATA 34, 195, 98, 195, 117, 96
80 RANDOMIZE USR 23300
```


This is the only warning you'll get. They're coming soon.
FIREBIRD
NEW FROM FIREBIRD. THE HOT RANGE.
Firebird is a Trade Mark of British Telecommunications plc

AT LAST!! A SPECTRUM SHOOT-EM-UP AS FAST, SMOOTH AND MEAN AS ANY FROM THE ARCADES GO FOR IT...



FOR SPECTRUM 48K £7.95

INSIGHT SOFTWARE.
117 HIGHER PARR ST.,
THE FINGERPOST SHOPPING CENTRE,
ST. HELENS,
MERSEYSIDE, ENGLAND. WA9 1AG.

ORDER YOUR COPY NOW! To: INSIGHT SOFTWARE.
117 HIGHER PARR ST., THE FINGERPOST SHOPPING CENTRE,
ST. HELENS, MERSEYSIDE, ENGLAND. WA9 1AG

NAME (BLOCK LETTERS) ....

ADDRESS..............................

COUNTY.............................. POSTCODE..............

Please send me .... copies of 'STAR FIREBIRDS' at £ 7·95 including P&P in U.K.

I enclose a cheque/P.O. for £ ....

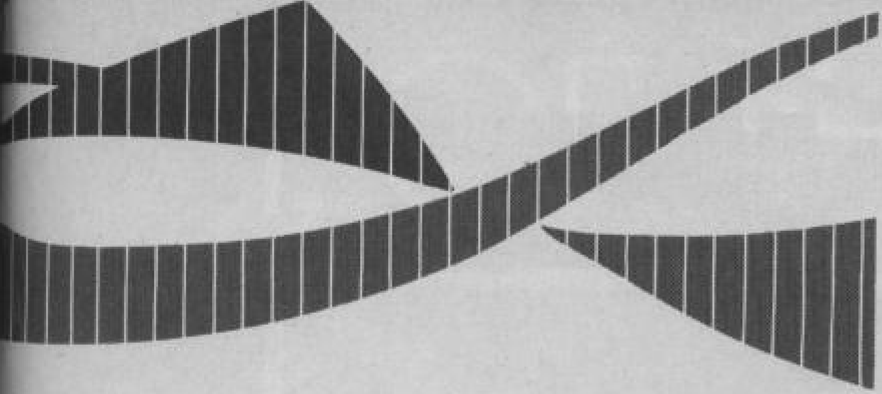
YOU MAY ORDER BY ACCESS ☐ VISA ☐ BY POST OR RING

DURING OFFICE HOURS Phone: 0744 22013 Telex: 629487 BLUECH G.

Please debit my credit card.

Account No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Signature ....



MATCH FISHING

This may not be a state of the art program, but if you have got it and enjoy playing the game then these tips from Graham



Easton **of Lincoln may prove useful in making the most of the peg you are given.**

Peg 1: use a float in deep water with a fixed spool. Use caster maggot, bread, bloodworm, luncheon meat, 3lb line, size 12 hook and strong cast. To catch Roach use a size 20 hook

Peg 2: Go on a pole, deep, maggot, bread worm, hempseed, luncheonmeat, 3lb line, 12 or 14 size hook (16 for Perch), strong cast.

Peg 3: Go on a float, deep, fixed spool, maggot, bread, worm, luncheonmeat, sweetcorn, 4lb line, 12 hook, strong medium or weak.

Peg 4: Go on a float, mid-water, fixed spool, maggot, caster, bloodworm, worm, 3lb line, 16 hook and a strong cast.

Peg 5: Go on a pole, deep, maggot, caster, hempseed, 3lb line, 16 hook and strong cast.

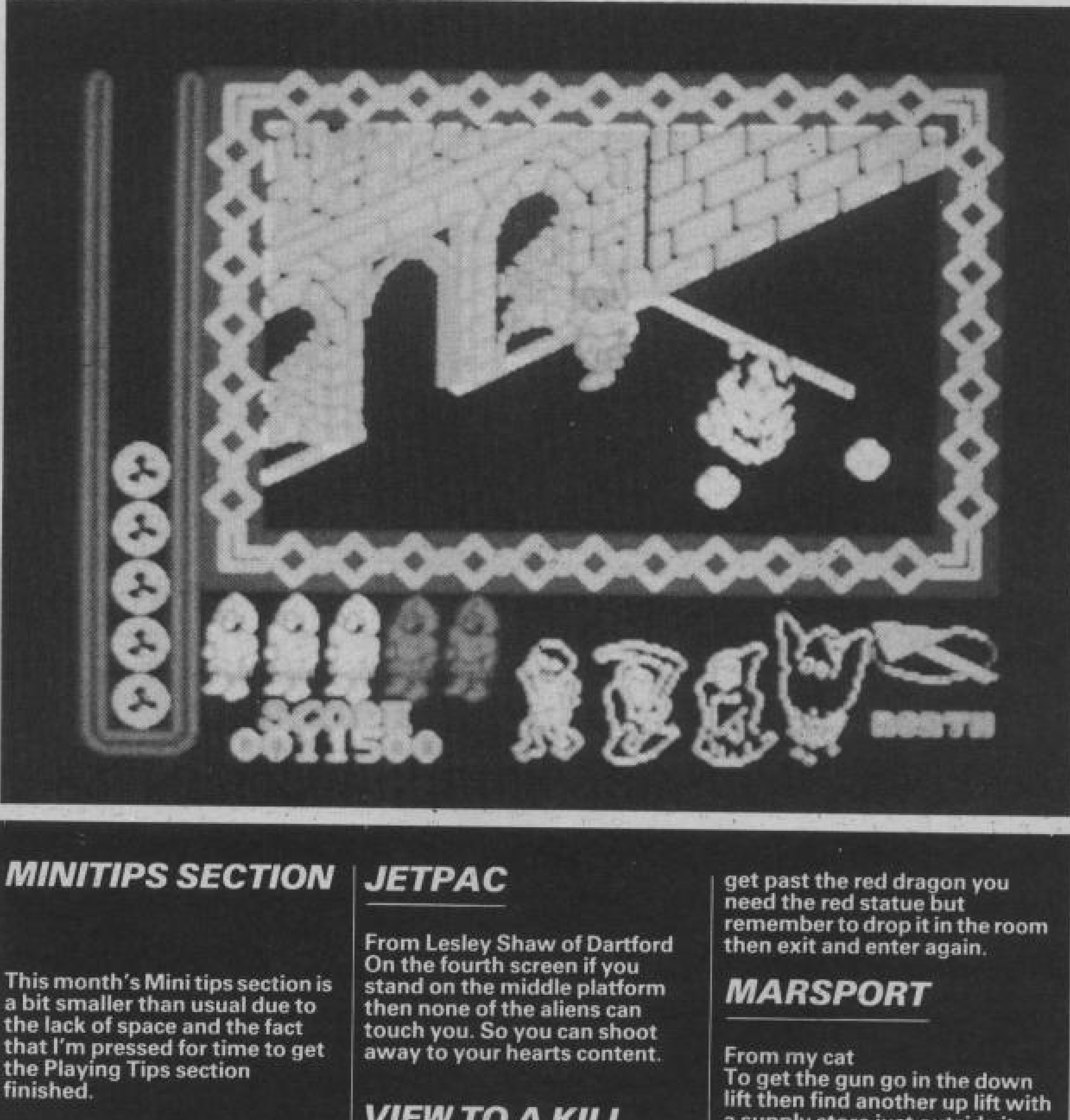
Peg 6: Go on a pole, deep, luncheonmeat, maggot, caster, worm, hempseed, sweetcorn, 4lb line, 12 or 10 hook and a weak cast.

Peg 7: Go on a pole, deep, maggot, caster, bread, bloodworm, worm, hempseed, luncheonmeat, sweetcorn, 4lb line, 12 or 10 hook and a weak or medium cast.

Peg 8: Go on a float, shallow, fixed spool, maggot, caster, 2lb line, 18 or 16 hook and a weak or medium cast.

PLAYING TIPS

NIGHTSHADE



Many people sent in tips and pokes (these are being reserved for the Christmas Special) for Ultimate's latest blockbuster . . . hopefully they will release



another game before Christmas. Thanks to Jason Ayres of Eynsham you should be able to get a bit more out of their latest game.

It is worth learning which antibodies kill which nasties because if you use the wrong antibody the creature will either double itself or change into something even worse. If you press Z then your view will change — this is undocumented, but it does work. Throughout the maze there are four extra weapons. These are used to destroy the four big nasties that are pictured at the bottom of the screen. When you are near a monster and you have the weapon needed to kill it then that object will flash. To destroy the baddy just throw the object at it. If you miss don't worry because the object will just fly past and you can go and pick it up.

GYRON

This isn't the most awe inspiring game but if you use this tip you should get an idea of how to actually play the game — all thanks to Alistair Mcleod of Dunfermaline. Also watch out for the *Gyron* pokes that should appear in the Christmas Special.

Due to a bug in the Atrium level it is possible to complete the easier game without playing it! Start the game and move the gun sight up about half way up the tower just in front of you. Take your finger off the fire button and move forward at full speed. When you crash into the wall you will lose some of your shield. Turn around and repeat this operation until you have lost almost all of your shield. Make sure your aim doesn't move and that you are firing when all your shields have been lost. Now watch the demo.

MINITIPS SECTION

This month's Mini tips section is a bit smaller than usual due to the lack of space and the fact that I'm pressed for time to get the Playing Tips section finished.

ROCKY

From Mark Towner of Stoke-on-Trent
On the first two boxers just keep punching and you will beat them. On the third and fourth boxers watch which hand the boxer taps and guard that side. Now wait until his arm drops to punch you, then punch him. Using this method it is possible to win the world championships quite easily.

JETPAC

From Lesley Shaw of Dartford
On the fourth screen if you stand on the middle platform then none of the aliens can touch you. So you can shoot away to your hearts content.

VIEW TO A KILL

From S Aspinwall of Harwood
When you have loaded the game called 'End' then try this code to see the final effect: HRMQE

RIDDLERS DEN

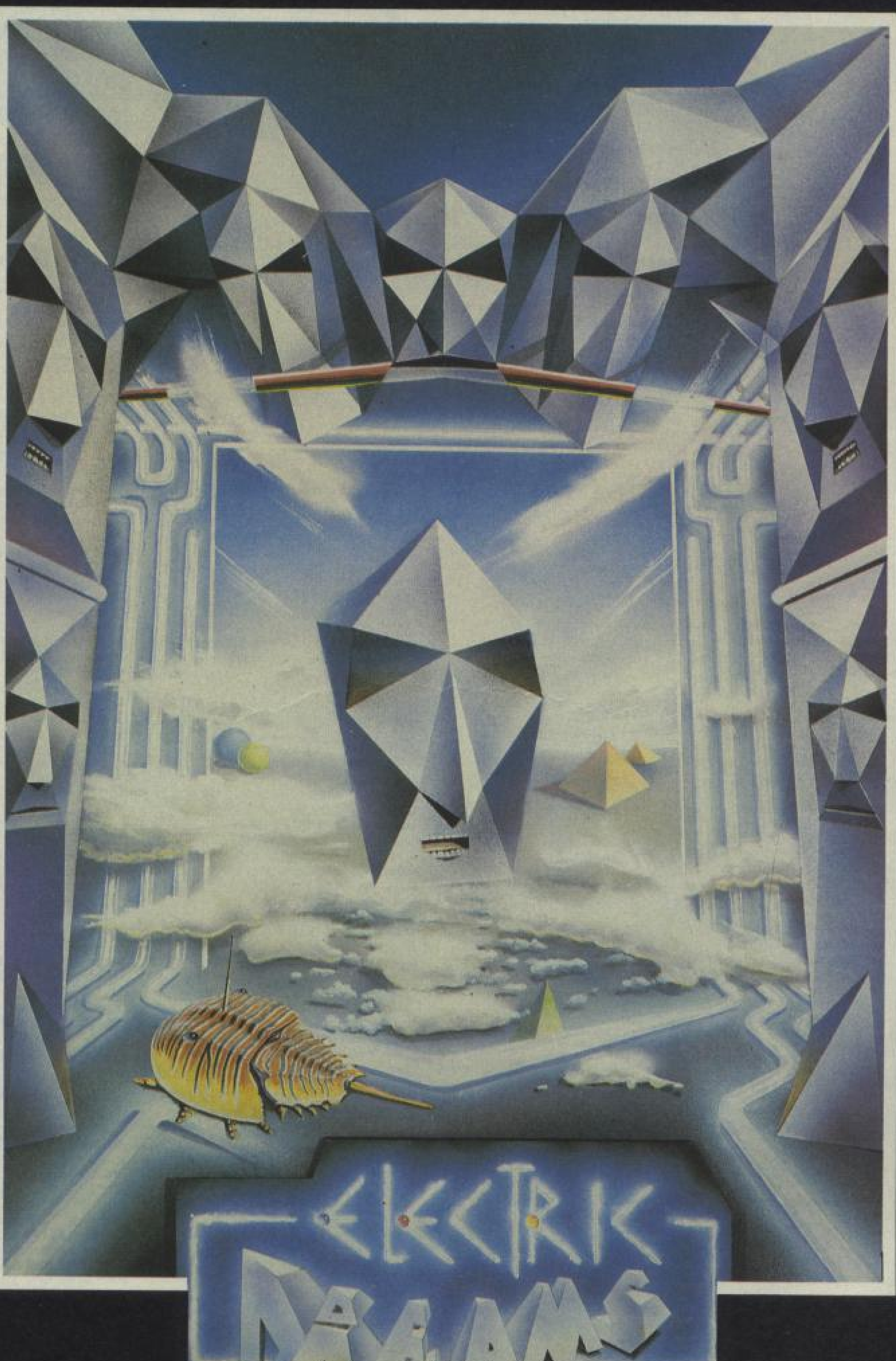
From Gary Sumpter of Birmingham
Find a pillow and put it in pocket 4. This enables you to go to sleep and thus regain energy. To get past the red dragon you need the red statue but remember to drop it in the room then exit and enter again.

MARSPORT

From my cat
To get the gun go in the down lift then find another up lift with a supply store just outside it. Take a gun permit from the supply unit and enter the lift. Search that floor and you will find the gun but you must first put the gun permit in the Key station. Now get killed. On the level you start on is a charge unit. Place the gun in this and you will be able to shoot all the small aliens.

That seems to be it for another month but just before I go I must make a plea for 4th Protocol tips because it seems that this game is driving lots of people crazy. So until next month I hope that these tips will keep you happy. By the way I don't look anything like my picture as people at the PCW will testify. The address to write into is:
ROBIN CANDY, CRASH PLAYING TIPS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB

I, OF THE MASK



Featuring a new generation of advanced 3D graphic techniques by Sandy White.
Available on the 48K Spectrum from Electric Dreams Software.
31 Carlton Crescent, Southampton. Tel: (0703) 225282



The Hall of Slime has been under attack from several quarters, not least from some CRASH readers who feel it's just full of cheats. But we know it isn't, don't we? Every score entered in this hallowed hall of squidgy gloom is the honest truth, and that's the truth. For every living Spectrum owner who wants to creep to his fellow readers, friends and family, Lloyd Mangram's Hall of Slime rules — at least, it does if you are telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth — so don't cheat!.

Tapper Space Bar
Highway Encounter Completed
3D Star Strike Level 12. 1,115,300
Frankie goes to Hollywood 98% and 96,000 points
Beach Head Completed with 196,500
Raid over Moscow Completed with 8 pilots and 225,800
Marcus Thomson, Scotland

Dynamite Dan 970,30
Finders Keepers Completed
Spy Hunter 507.750
Hunchack 52,000
Hypersports All events completed 4 times 270,039
3D Starstrike 610,000
Highway Encounter Completed with 34,130
Spy Hunter Completed 486,035
Sabre Wulf Completed 75%
Rocky Completed
Mark Davies, Wales

Atic Atac Completed
Match Day Thrashed all opposition
Booty 103 pieces
Underwurlde Completed
Jane Hicks, Surrey

Tapper 70,400
Spy vs. Spy Grand master spy
Booty 28 pieces
Nicholas Holland, Bransley

Rocky Horror Show Completed One day
Raid Over Moscow Completed
Beach Head Completed
Bruno's Boxing Won Final
World Cup Won final
Clive Haliday, Iruine, Ayreshire

Hypersports Completed all events five times with 349988
Ian Doggett, Ipswich

Bruce Lee Completed six times
Way of the Exploding Fist 10th Dan and 46,400
Pyjamarama Completed, 98%
Herbets Dummy Run Completed 101%
3D Starstrike 2,236,000
Highway Encounter completed highway one
Stop the Express Stopped the Express once
David Godden, Folkestone, Kent

Raid Over Moscow Completed with 5 men left, 152,000
Way of the Exploding Fist 10th Dan, 101,900
Alien 8 12 Chambers
Hypersports Swimming 25.02 secs., Shooting 9,100, Vaulting 8.25m, Triple Jump 14.42m, Archery 3,720, Weight Lifting 260 kg
Baseball Won, 24-6
Peter Williams, St Ives

Bruce Lee Completed 3 times
Underwurlde Completed
Hypersports Swimming 25.82 secs., Skeet Shooting 9,100, Long Horse 9.49, Archery 4,000, Triple Jump 19.28m, Weightlifting Heavy weight, Overall 161,239
Frank Bruno's Boxing Beat Peter Perfect, 32.09 secs.
Gran National First
Technician Ted Five tasks
Lords of Midnight Completed
Hunchback Completed
Chiton Misly, Ponds End, Middlesex

Alien 8 7 chambers activated
Atic Atac 99% Complete
Sabre Wulf 96% Completed
Nightshade 57% Completed
Match Day Won F.A. Cup
Spy Hunter 351,850
Spy vs. Spy Beaten computer on all levels
Booty 98 Objects
Beachead Completed 94,000
Jet Pac 202,150
Paul Waskett, Wickford, Essex

Hypersports Completed 5 times
Match Day Beat computer 5-0
Roland's Rat Race Completed, 17850
Frankie Goes to Hollywood Solved murder, 91%, 87,660
Booty 83 pieces left
Nicholas Pocklington, Skegness, Lincolnshire

Bruce Lee Completed 3 times
Underwurlde Completed
Hypersports 161239, Swimming 25'82, Skeet Shooting 9100, Long Horse 9.49, Archery 4000, Triple Jump 19'28, Weightlifting Heavyweight
Finders Keepers Completed
Frankie 82%, almost completed
Technician Ted 5 Tasks

Highway Encounter 14350, Zone 6
Shadowfire Completed
Doomdarks Revenge Completed
Lords of Midnight Completed
Knight Lore Seven Items
Beach Head Completed
Avalon Supreme Lore Seeker
Richard Wilkinson, Bisley, Surrey

Way of the Exploding Fist 149,800
Richard Hood, Burbage, Leicestershire

Bruce Lee Completed three times, 198,650
Beaky and the Eggsnatchers Completed two and a half times
Jet Set Willy Completed with pokes
Manic Miner Completed
Airwolf Completed
Sabre Wulf Completed
Ad Astra Level 14, 32000
Timegate Completed
Simon Blade, Morcambe, Lancs.

Atic Atac 89% completed
Bruce Lee 450,325 with 5 men left
Alien 8 12 Rooms activated
Dean Jones, Gravesend, Kent

Combat Lynx 300,025
Sabre Wulf Completed, 87%
Dark Star Completed, 6,710
Return of the Jedi 17,210
Monty Mole Completed
Knight Lore 7 charms
Monty is Innocent 1 min 7 secs
Peter Gilbert, Hucknall, Notts.

Lords of Midnight Completed
Doomdarks Revenge Completed
Frankie 97% a real person, 93,700 pleasure points
Match Point Won on semi finals, 6-1, 6-1, 6-2
3D Deathchase 84,026
River Rescue 71,950
Chequered Flag Cambridge Ring 0.49:44, Monza 1.04:46, Microdrive 0.54:00
3D Escape 18 secs.
Meteor Storm 499,280
P. Lear, Wivenhoe, Colchester

Spy Hunter 500,270
Lords of Midnight Completed both ways
Legend Parts 1 and 2 completed
Anthony Powel, Cullumpton, Devon

Frank Bruno Beaten players 1,2,3,4 and 5
Way of the Exploding Fist Beaten 10th Dan 22 times, 208,100
Cyclone 15 boxes, had to give up 'cos friend was moaning
Kung Fu Level 6, Black belt
Atic Atac 99% completed
Jet Pac 51,600
Bruce Lee Killed Wizard ten times, 601,125
Matchday Beaten final 14-0
Rocky Horror Show Completed with time at 5
Paul G., Crewe




Back to Skool
oops
Dragged back for another term, Eric continues his one-man fight against the Education system. All his old adversaries are there, plus escapees from the Biology room and, even worse, girls! Lucky he stocked up on stink bombs over the holidays!
Back to Skool (48K Spectrum) — £6.95
Skooldaze (48K Spectrum & CBM64) — £6.95
Available from all good computer shops or direct from:
MICROSPHERE
Microsphere Computer Services Ltd., 72, Rosebery Road, London N10 2LA.



Hypersports Swimming 25.76 secs., Shooting 9,100, Vault 9.10m, Archery 4,20 0, Triple Jump 15.02m, Weightlifting Heavy weight
Shadowfire Completed
3D Starstrike 1,000,500 on easy
Moon Cresta Far out 4 times, 38,890
Spy Hunter 402,350
Adrian Daw, Plymouth, Devon

Nightshade 40% with 340,500
Herberts Dummy Run 97 jelly babies
Jet Set Willy II 83 items
Pyjamarama 100%, 1703 paces
Wizard's Lair 37%, 75,445
Jonathon Edwards, Beckenham, Kent

Wild Bunch Completed
Booty 80 pieces left
Bruce Lee 796,475
Technician Ted 3 tasks completed
Skool Daze 23,240
Pole Position 46,950
Chuckie Egg II 53,230
Nik Dunmore, Boston, Lincolnshire

Hyper Sports Swimming 25.86; Clay Pigeon 9100; Horse 9.99m; Archery 4200; Tripple Jump 17.82m; Weight Lifting 195kg; best overall 172,478
Frank Bruno's Boxing Best KO times — Canadian Crusher 33.42; Fling Long Chop 51.34; Andra Puncheredov 105.38
Ghostbusters account 023134621; amount $310,900
Alan Maber, Andover, Hants

Jetpac 88,545
Mooncresta 19,990
Starstrike 686,800 (easy); 549,500 (medium)
Adam Page, London W4

Mugsy 84%
Pyjamarama 2449 steps 98%
Skool Daze 31,520
Chuckie Egg II 456,010
Beach Head 198,550
Steve Davis Snooker break of 109
Hypersports Swimming 25.98; Skeets 9300; Horse 8.72m; Archery 3750; Tripple Jump 15.02m; Weight Lifting 240kg
Monty is Innocent 1 min 19 secs
Moon Cresta 54,450
Cavern Fighter 90,010
Bryan O'Rourke (14), Ullapool, Ross-shire

Pyjamarama completed 100%
Everyone's a Wally completed £1520
Herbert's Dummy Run 48 jelly babies
Spy Hunter 724525 on Novice
Match Day 5-nill in final
Cauldron Collected frog, fireball and a chest
Way of The Exploding Fist 10th Dan and a score of 244100. *Gary claims that only his sister stopped him getting more*
Gary Hughes Holywell, Clwyd.

Hypersports 179,860
Match Day 14 - 1 for a five minute game
Airwolf 3 scientists
Tapper over 1 million
Technician Ted seven tasks competed
Shadowfire competed **Alien 8** competed
Full Throttle 1st Silverstone
Way of Exploding Fist 10th Dan for 18 times (after 27 rounds)
Stuart Tinto, Wishaw, Lanarkshire

Hypersports 297989
Rocco Beat first boxer
Frank Bruno's Boxing reached 6th boxer
Dambusters destroyed two dams
Spy Vs Spy competed (knee high spy)
Pole Position Reached final lap
Highway Encounter reached zone 4
Wheelie reached third level
Sabre Wulf competed 96% with help of my friend David
Terry Houston, Lisburn N.Ireland

Match Day 16 - 0 in 5 minutes of the final
Spy Hunter 535,440 on novice **Bruce Lee** killed the Wizard 13 times
Hypersports 257,830
Rocco competed
Frankie 84% a real person
Roland Rat competed
Shers (the honest), York

Dt's Decathlon 100 metres 9.20 seconds; Long Jump 9.71 metres; Shot Putt 26.51 metres; High Jump 2.43 metres; 400 metres 28.62 seconds. DAY 2 110 hurdles 13.44; Pole Vault 5 metres; Discus 75.90 metres; Javelin 114.80 metres; 1500 metres 267.99 seconds.
Atic Atac 63%
The Hobbit 22.5 %
Ghostbusters £38,400
Gregory Myles, Weedon, Northampton

Underwurlde 64,532 at 17%
Shadowfire competed
Beach Head Won on easy
Match Day Won FA Cup 5-4
Starion 1 grid 5 zones
Sean Smith, Lichfield

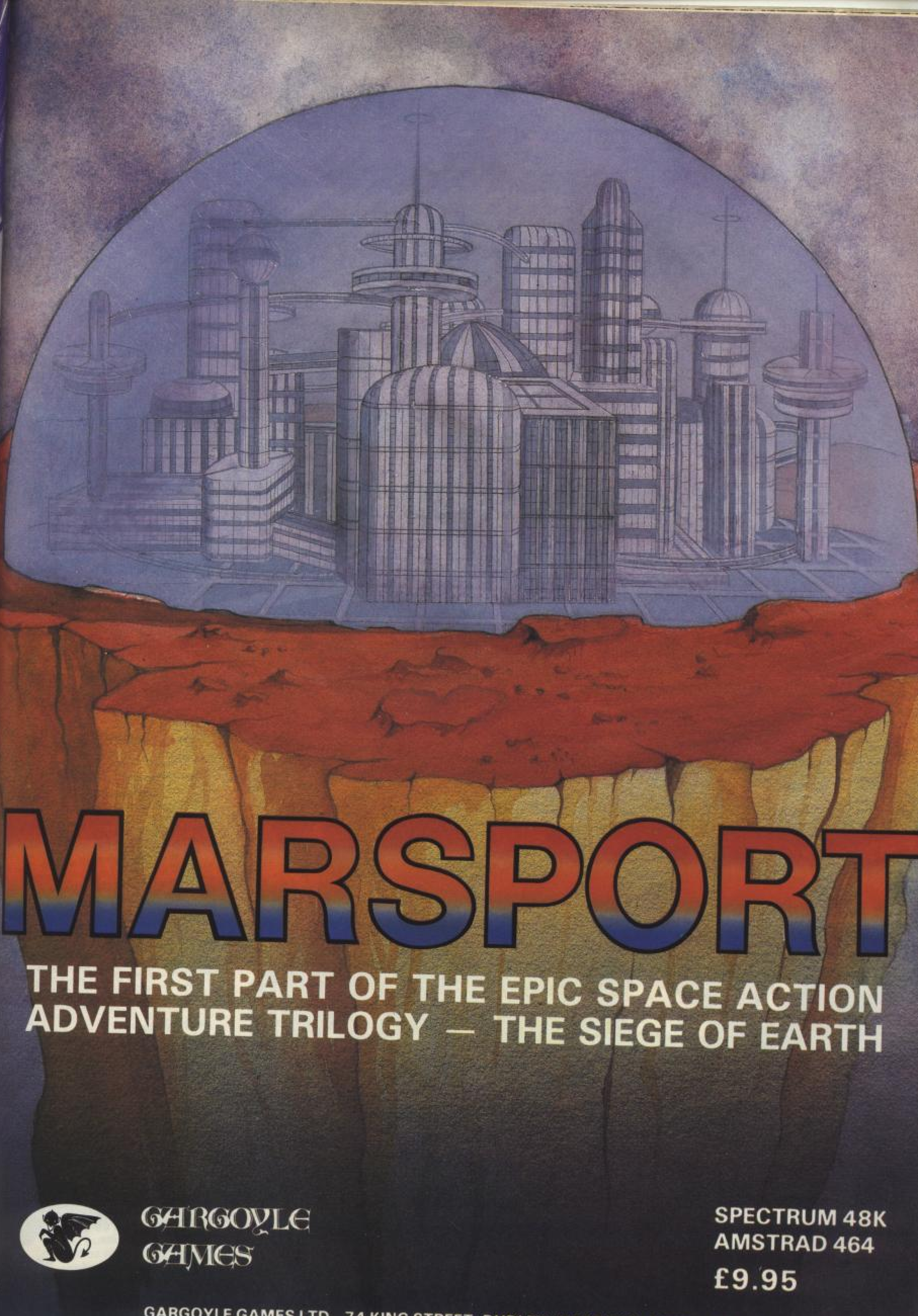
Hypersports 187,337
Raid Over Moscow competed with seven pilots left, 205,750
Spy Hunter 122,450
Knight Lore competed 82%
Starion 1,460
Blue Max class 1 7,210
Kokotoni Wilf competed
Booty 79 pieces
Atic Atac 93%
Herbert's Dummy Run competed in 1:43 99 jelly babies
Sean and Julian Barrasso, Woodston, Peterborough

The Way Of the Exploding Fist 46,200 8th Dan
Football Manager 100% won FA Cup every season
Match Day Won every level
Urban Upstartcompeted
Beach Head competed 106,200
Starstrike 26,500,000
Cauldren 2850
Hypersports 126,180
David Stokoe, Blackley, Manchester.

Everyone's a Wally competed with £2610
Factory Breakout 2560 on gamma level
Sabre Wulf 3 bits of the amulet 57%
Manic Miner reached the warehouse
Jet Set Willy 72 items collected
Denis Fitton (10), Solihull, West Midlands

Dynamite Dan 737 3 sticks of dynamite
Alien 8 14 chambers
Knightlore 10 objects
Bruce Lee 148,825
Spyhunter 1,793,825 on novice
Underwurlde 53%
Skool Daze 2 shields after getting report
Weasel Willey (Don't Buy This) 6,183
Brian Jacks side 1- 1,178 side 2- 766
DT Decathlon side 1- 239041 side 2- 542838
Hobbit competed 93%
Raid Over Moscow 51,300 on easy
3D Starstrike 953,200 on easy
Sabre Wulf 3,478,550 competed 94%
Pyjamarama competed 94%
Jet Set Willy competed
Atic Attack competed
Stop The Express 8,230
Manic Miner 30,750
Kung Fu black belt
Jet Pac 1,307,900
Boulderdash 83,250
Factory Breakout 18,700
Booty 29 pieces
Chuckie Egg 156,230
Nodes of Yesod 34%
Airwolf 3 scientists
Kokotoni Wilf competed
Trashman 20,423
Lunar Jetman 54,680
Beach Head 105,600
Match Day beat computer 14-0
Hypersports 365,321
Jet Set Willy 43 objects
Olympic Challenge 9,371
Tex Johnson, Farnborough, Hants
Tex you are either as imagin ative as your friend Arthur C Clark or twice as busy




MARSPORT
THE FIRST PART OF THE EPIC SPACE ACTION
ADVENTURE TRILOGY — THE SIEGE OF EARTH
GARGOYLE
GAMES
SPECTRUM 48K
AMSTRAD 464
£9.95
GARGOYLE GAMES LTD., 74 KING STREET, DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS DY2 8QB
Telephone: (Sales) 0384 238777 (General) 0384 237222

SCOOBY DO

The World's First



Fifty Scooby Packs to be won

Ever since someone referred to him as looking like 'a six foot tall Cabbage Patch Doll' (FORUM, this issue), our Software Editor, Jeremy Spencer has been worrying about his weight.

He was always munching something or other in the office, spraying his Amstrad with crumbs, it seemed. Then inspiration hit him, with the arrival of a diet program on the Amstrad which he decided to review by doing. Trouble is, this diet program is ideal for a fellow like him — he's STILL munching all day! Only time will tell if he does manage to lose weight . . . ..

Scooby and Shaggy are a bit like Jem. Always eating, given the chance. They don't get given that much of a chance to stuff themselves with 'Scooby Snacks' in Elite's latest program, *Scooby Doo In the Castle Mystery* however. They're too busy cavorting round the dungeons and secret corridors under your control during the game to pause for troughing sessions. The game was previewed last issue and should be complete and ready for review in time for us to take a close look at it next issue . . . from what we've seen so far, £6.95 should buy you a whole lot of Scooby Fun soon!

OOBY DOO!

Crash Competition

st Ever Design a Snack Competition



Soooo here's a good excuse for a competition!

The nice Mr Wilcox at Elite's so pleased with the new game produced by the Scooby Squad down at Elite Towers, that he's offering no less than fifty Scooby Packs (PACKS not snacks) as prizes. Each Elite Scooby Pack will contain a copy of the game, a poster and a special iron-on Scooby patch! Not bad eh?

Now, entering's easy. Bear in mind Jem's munching diet and Scooby'n Shaggy's snacking sessions. Design two snacks — a Scooby Snack suitable for the dynamic duo which will keep their hunger pangs at bay while they are solving the Castle Mystery and a Jem Snack which will help (ahem!) him loose weight! You can list the ingredients on a big sheet of paper if you like, alternatively you can draw or paint the snacks. Indeed, you could actually make them, photograph them and get them endorsed by Delia Smith if you like.

Just get your snack recipies in to WEIGHT WATCHERS, CRASH, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB to arrive by 21st November. Fifty tastiest morsel menus out of the dumb waiter that day win a Scooby pack.

HOTLINE TOP 30 FOR NOV



1 (2) **HYPERSPORTS** Ocean
2 (—) **WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST** Melbourne House
3 (3) **SPYHUNTER** US Gold
4 (9) **SPY VS SPY** Beyond
5 (5) **DUN DARACH** Gargoyle Games
6 (1) **SHADOWFIRE** Beyond
7 (4) **ALIEN 8** Ultimate
8 (6) **MATCH DAY** Ocean
9 (10) **NODES OF YESOD** Odin
10 (7) **KNIGHTLORE** Ultimate

There are four brand new entries this month, the biggest leap of all being from *Way of the Exploding Fist*, in at the number two slot which should please karate fans and **Melbourne House** alike. At 12, **Ultimate**'s *Nightshade* makes its first appearance, and just another two down, so does *Highway Encounter* from **Vortex**. At 21 **Ocean**'s *Frankie* leaps in, arrows aflying. There are also reappearances from *Raid Over Moscow* and *Sabre Wulf*. Elsewhere in the chart, there are few changes except for *DT's Decathlon*, which improves its position again, and *Herbert's Dummy Run* which drops a few notches.

11 (8) **FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING** Elite
12 (—) **NIGHTSHADE** Ultimate
13 (11) **STARION** Melbourne House
14 (—) **HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER** Vortex
15 (12) **BRUCE LEE** US Gold
16 (13) **MATCH POINT** Ocean
17 (25) **DT'S DECATHLON** Ocean
18 (19) **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
19 (20) **DOOMDARK'S REVENGE** Beyond
20 (14) **EVERYONE'S A WALLY** Mikro-Gen

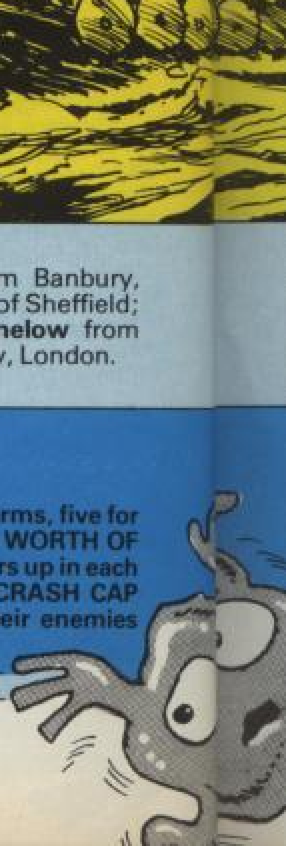
21 (—) **FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD** Ocean
22 (16) **DYNAMITE DAN** Mirrorsoft
23 (21) **SKOOL DAZE** Microsphere
24 (26) **UNDERWURLDE** Ultimate
25 (15) **HERBERT'S DUMMY RUN** Mikro-Gen
26 (—) **RAID OVER MOSCOW** US Gold
27 (22) **MOON CRESTA** Incentive
28 (23) **WORLD SERIES BASEBALL** Imagine
29 (—) **SABRE WULF** Ultimate
30 (28) **TAPPER** US Gold

HOTLINE CHART WINNERS
This month's outright winner is **BM Holmes** from Banbury, Oxfordshire. The four runners up are; **Alan Stevens** of Sheffield; **Christopher Doran** from Glasgow; **Matthew Brimelow** from Dukinfield, Cheshire; and **Sanjay Maharaj** of Finchley, London.

NEW BRILL 'N' FAB HOTLINE PRIZES!!!

The CRASH HOTLINE & ADVENTURE CHART is Britain's most important popularity chart. It depends entirely on your support and we need your votes. There's now only ONE WAY to submit your votes, and that's by sending them to us in the mail. Use the coupons which normally lurk on page 122 (ish), or a photocopy or even hand-tooled Moroccan parchment to whizz your votes to us.

Remember, every month we draw out ten winning forms, five for each chart and the first out of each sack receives £40 WORTH OF SOFTWARE plus a CRASH T-SHIRT. Then the four runners up in each chart will win their very own CRASH T-Shirt and a CRASH CAP which they can use to impress their friends, make their enemies envious and generally show off with!





ADVENTURE TOP 30 CHART

On the adventure front, the chart seems to leap around quite a bit, but there's no doubt that it is dominated by **Level 9** and **Adventure International**. **Level 9** have no less than six games in the chart, kicking off with the arrival of *Red Moon* straight in at the number one position. *The Fourth Protocol* improves — up 9 slots to this month's number two, closely followed by **Gargoyle**'s *Dun Darach*, up from seven to three. In fact the chart is still favouring the graphical arcade/adventures with *Tir Na Nog*, *Avalon*, *Dragontorc* and the Midnights also in strong evidence.



1 *(—)* **RED MOON** Level 9 Computing
2 *(11)* **FOURTH PROTOCOL** Hutchinson
3 *(7)* **DUN DARACH** Gargoyle Games
4 *(5)* **COLOSSAL ADVENTURE** Level 9 Computing
5 *(1)* **LORDS OF TIME** Level 9 Computing
6 *(19)* **SHADOWFIRE** Beyond
7 *(20)* **SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
8 *(13)* **KENTILLA** Micromega
9 *(2)* **DOOMDARK'S REVENGE** Beyond
10 *(24)* **TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games

11 *(6)* **DRAGONTORC** Hewson Consultants
12 *(23)* **THE HULK** Adventure International
13 *(10)* **EUREKA** Domark
14 *(8)* **EMERALD ISLE** Level 9 Computing
15 *(21)* **SNOWBALL** Level 9 Computing
16 *(4)* **AVALON** Hewson Consultants
17 *(17)* **OUT OF THE SHADOWS** Mizar
18 *(21)* **SPIDERMAN** Adventure International
19 *(12)* **GREMLINS** Adventure International
20 *(18)* **RETURN TO EDEN** Level 9 Computing

21 *(3)* **THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House
22 *(26)* **URBAN UPSTART** Richard Shepherd
23 *(27)* **VALHALLA** Legend
24 *(14)* **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
25 *(9)* **ERIK THE VIKING** Mosaic
26 *(25)* **TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY** Bug-Byte
27 *(—)* **HAMSTEAD** Melbourne House
28 *(30)* **WITCHES CAULDRON** Mikro-Gen
29 *(29)* **VELNOR'S LAIR** Quicksilva
30 *(16)* **ORACLE'S CAVE** Dorcas

ADVENTURE CHART WINNERS
The winner is **Keith Hatton** from Harlow, Essex; and the four runners up are **Steven Murray** from Wigan; **David Griffiths** from Ashton-in-Makerfield; **Jonathon Mortlock** of Lichfield; and **Alasdair Kelly** from Aberdour, Scotland.



THE EXPRESS GANG PART II

The crazy Express gang continues with two slightly more powerful adversaries. In the last issue, Sinclair's MICRODRIVE and the TRITON QD disk drive both provided low-cost fast storage media at for less than £120.00. This issue sees another low cost contender, which is a direct competitor to Sinclair's MICRODRIVE, Rotronic's WAFADRIVE. The WAFADRIVE provides two disk drives, RS232 serial and Centronics parallel output ports for printers and communication handled with the extended Basic commands using streams and channels. In fact, the WAFADRIVE seems to convert the Spectrum into a full specification computer, . . . well nearly.

The other contender is Technology Research's BETA disk drive with the new updated disk operating system TR-DOS V4. This unit must be a little gem for games fanatics, as it allows them to store their hard-earned cassette software collection to disk for instant recall. If that isn't enough, the system caters for random access data files, where any specified record may be read or written to — no more long wait cycles while skipping to the required record. Although the BETA disk commands reside in the operating system, they may be accessed from Sinclair Basic or machine code. The BETA interface unit is not expensive, but it does exclude the drives, so the complete system reaches normal disk drive price levels, which are certainly above those of the previously mentioned fast storage units.

In the next issue there are more drives to follow, including the KEMPSTON disk interface, the OPUS DISCOVERY and the TIMEX disk systems. The last of this series will feature a comparison table listing all the drives reviewed, so that the important decision of selecting the right drive for the right job will be that much easier . . .

ROTRONICS WAFADRIVE

HARDWARE:
The *WAFADRIVE* unit consists of a large black box containing two stringy floppy drives, the disk drive interfacing and the serial and Centronics parallel ports. It connects to the Spectrum via its flat cable to the system edge connector. There is a power indicator and each drive has a drive-active LED. At the rear of the unit are located the expansion bus connector and the non-standard Centronics and serial connectors. Included in the package are two wafers, one blank, the other containing Softek's *Spectral Writer* word processor.

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION:
The WAFADRIVE belongs to the



group of stringy floppy drives. The wafers are *ENTREPO* stringy floppy cartridges with varying capacities of 16K, 64K or 128K (formatted). As the file storage is sequential, the access time increases linearly depending on the capacity of the cartridge. The access speed is improved with the use of a fast search speed for swift file location. The extended Basic commands made available by the Wafadrive Operating System (WOS) do not come into operation until the system has been initialised with a **NEW** * command. Once initialised, the WOS reserves about 2K of the Spectrum's memory for its own use. The WOS resides in a special 8K ROM, which is paged automatically like Sinclair's ZX Interface 1 ROM. The WAFADRIVE unit also incorporates a Centronics parallel and a serial RS232 interface, both accessed via the extra ROM commands. Software access to these ports is via the channels and streams procedure known to the ZX Interface 1 owners. The availability of the two ports means you can connect any low-cost printer via the parallel port, while at the same time communicate with another computer system via the serial port. The inclusion of a full-blown word-processing package converts the Spectrum into a 'serious' home or small business computer.

OPERATING SYSTEM:
Extended Basic residing in automatically paged ROM.

SYSTEM COMMANDS:
BREAK *aborts execution of Basic.*
CAT*"d:" *displays the directory of the wafer in the specified drive.*
CAT#"d:" *loads in the directory of the specified drive without displaying it on screen.*
CLEAR* *closes all previously opened streams or data file channels and sets streams 0-3 to their default allocation.*
CLOSE # stream *closes the stream previously opened using* OPEN # *and sets streams 0-3 to their default value.*
CLOSE#* stream *closes the stream previously opened using* OPEN # *or* OPEN#*. *Closing streams assigned to data file output channels causes the file to be stored on wafer and the directory to be updated.*
CLS* *clears the screen but also resets the attributes to PAPER 7, BORDER 7 and INK 0.*
ERASE*"d:filename" *removes the specified file from the wafer. Wild card facility operates with* ERASE.
FORMAT*"R"; baudrate *sets the RS232 transmit/receive data rate. Default value is 1200 baud.*
FORMAT*"d:wafername" *formats and names wafer.*
INKEY$ # stream; variables *reads next single character from previously opened input channel, via assigned stream.*
INPUT # stream; variables *reads data from previoulsy opened input channel, via assigned stream.*
LIST # stream, line *lists program, starting at optional line number, to specified stream.*
LOAD*"d:filename" *loads specified program, Basic or machine code.* LOAD* *alone loads first program in directory of wafer in default drive.*
MERGE*"d:filename" *merges specified Basic program with that currently stored in memory.*
MOVE*"d:filename1"TO"d:filename2" *makes a copy of file specified in filename1, optionally giving it the name specified in filename2. Wildcard works with* MOVE.
NEW *clears Basic program and also resets the WOF, freeing the reserved RAM.*
NEW* *initialises the WOF, reserving around 2K bytes for the directories and extended system variables.*
NEW# *clears the Basic program area without resetting the WOF.*
OPEN # stream,"channel" *opens the specified stream and assigns it to the specified channel.*
OPEN#* stream,"port" *opens the specified stream and assigns it to the specified port.*
OPEN#* stream,"d:filename" *opens the specified stream and assigns it to a data file channel. The channel is opened as an output channel, if the file is new, otherwise as an input channel.*
PRINT # stream;"string", data, variables *sends string or numeric data to previously opened output stream.*
SAVE*"d:filename"LINE run *saves Basic program in memory to drive specified. Optional* LINE *suffix gives autorun facility. Error report if file already exists.*
SAVE*"d:filename", start, length, run *saves machine code bytes from memory. Optional autorun facility. Error report if file already exists.*
SAVE # *provides same features as above, but allows overwriting of existing file.*
VERIFY*"d:filename" *verifies Basic or machine code program on wafer against that stored in memory.*

ERROR REPORTS:
26 error reports

EXTRA FACILITIES:
Serial RS232 interface with software selectable baud rates from 110 to 19200 baud. Sending and receiving of text and binary files. Centronics parallel output port.

MANUAL:
Excellent 68 page manual with good introductory instructions, full explanation of entire system including parallel and serial port usage, complete command summary, error report list and valuable information for experienced programmers including memory map and port addresses and explanation of extended system variables.

APPLICATION PROGRAMS:
SPECTRAL WRITER word processing package by **Softek** with 64 character wide display, extensive facilities including printer configuration.

CRITICISM:
Slow access time with high capacity wafers.
Non-standard parallel and serial port connectors require specially configured cables.

COMMENTS:
Excellent value for money system offering two drives, Centronics and RS232 ports and useful word processing package. Despite similar performance to ZX microdrives, the drive system has a more rugged and reliable feel. The Wafadrive system doesn't provide local area networking, but has extra parallel port for low-cost printer connection.

MEDIA:
Entrepo stringy floppy wafers with infinite loop 1/16" width various length tape for 16K, 64K and 128K capacity. Write protection by removable tab. Life expectancy approx. 5000 passes. **Prices**

16K Wafa £2.49
64K Wafa £2.79
128K Wafa £2.99

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION:
Number of drives: 2
Storage capacity (formatted) max.128K
Sector size: 1K bytes
Number of sectors: up to 128
Transfer rate: 18K Baud (2K bytes/sec)
Tape speed: 10"/sec (fast search 15"/sec)

TIMING:
Formatting (approx):
16K 47 secs
64K 2 mins 30 secs
128K 4mins 42 secs
Cataloguing (approx):
16K up to 8.5 secs
64K up to 27 secs
128K up to 47 secs
Loading a screen (approx):
16K up to 12.5 secs
64K up to 29.5 secs
128K up to 51 secs

PRICE:
£129.95

Leads

Centronics £12.95
RS232 £10.95



BETA DISK TR-DOS INTERFACE

PRICE:
£109.25 inc VAT
Plus £4.00 p&p

HARDWARE:
The package consists of the disk interface unit which connects up to the expansion port of the Spectrum and a software disk. No disk drives are supplied. The unit was tested using a twin 5, disk drive unit with integral power supply kindly lent to CRASH by **Cumana**, 'the best memory people in the business' (no chance of them forgetting their equipment on loan!).

The BETA disk interface features a standard Shugart compatible disk drive port at the righthand side, to which the required disk drive or drives may be connected via a flat ribbon cable. Up to four disk drives can be connected to the system and these can be 40 or 80 track, single or double sided. To the rear of the interface is an expansion port for further Spectrum add-ons and the 'Magic Button' which activates the *RAM Image Saver*. To the left is situated a reset button.

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION:
On power-up the system boots up into the Disk Operating System (DOS) environment and not in Sinclair Basic. The interface automatically checks the drive specification and adjusts its speed and format accordingly. Access to the disk system is gained by use of the DOS commands. At any time Basic may be called up via a RETURN command. Re entering DOS is via RANDOMIZE USR 15360. The DOS commands can be used in Basic in the form of a RANDOMIZE USR:REM: call, similarily in machine code via a CALL 15363 command after having changed the Basic variable CH ADD to point to an address line buffer. A program stored under the name of 'boot' may be run by simply typing RUN and ENTER. The DOS caters for random access files, which allows proper database operation.

At the press of the 'Magic Button' the running program is interrupted and the whole image of the RAM is be saved on disk. The image may be retrieved from the disk to the RAM with the program continuing to run from where it was interrupted. This means that games may be loaded via cassette in the usual way and once the loading sequence is completed the program may be saved to disk without the change of a single byte in RAM to upset the continuation of the game. This provides a disk copy of any game which runs on the Spectrum and should prove to be a nightmare for any software house if it isn't for the fact that very few Spectrum owners can actually afford a disk system. The disk system requires a buffer of 256 bytes (one sector) and uses the printer buffer of the Spectrum. Before the buffer is used, it is stored on the system track of the disk. When the operation is completed, the original printer buffer data is reloaded from disk. RAM data is only lost if the disk is write protected. The software disk provided with the interface contains a range of useful disk utilities.

OPERATING SYSTEM:
BETA TR-DOS V4

SYSTEM COMMANDS:
CAT *lists the files on disk. The listing can be dumped to a channel when the command is extended to* CAT# number.

COPY *copies specified source file on source drive to destination file on destination drive. Will not work with single disk system.*
CLOSE #channel-number *closes specified channel.*
ERASE *removes a file from disk*
FORMAT *checks the drive specification and formats the disk. A doublesided disk drive can be forced to format as a singlesided with a disk name starting with '$'. This is essential for use with the RAM saver.*
GO TO "filename"CODE *loads and runs a saved RAM image.*
LOAD *loads program from disk to memory. A Basic program stored with a line number will autorun from that line number, otherwise the program will be automatically listed. When loading a machine program, it can be relocated with* LOAD "filename"CODE new address.
MERGE *merges Basic program with the program in RAM.*
MOVE *repacks the files on disk*
NEW *changes the name of an existing file on disk.*
OPEN # channel-number,"filename"W *opens a channel for write. To save a string to disk in filename requires a Basic function* PRINT$channel-number.
OPEN # channel-number,"filename"R *opens a channel for read. To read data from filename on disk requires an* INPUT #channel-number; variable.
INPUT # channel-number; (record-number), variable-name *reads a record from the file when random access file is open.*
OPEN # channel-number,"filename"RND, record-length *opens a file for random access*



DOS V4□

PEEK *reads any required part of a file on disk and transfers the data into RAM. A complete sector is read and transferred to the specified location within the Buffer RAM.*
POKE *writes a specified sector of data from RAM to any location on disk.*
PRINT channel-number; record-number, variable-name *writes a record to a file when random access file is open.*
RANDOMIZE USR 15360 *calls up DOS from Spectrum Basic.*
RUN "filename" *loads and runs Basic program filename.*
RUN "filename"CODE *loads and runs machine code program filename.*
SAVE "filename" *saves a Basic program.*
SAVE "filename"LINE number *saves a Basic program run from line number.*
SAVE "filename"CODE n, m *saves a machine code program.*
SAVE "filename"DATA a() **or** a$() *saves a variable* **or** *character array.*
40 *informs the system that the currently selected drive is a 40 track drive. Required for drives without an end stop switch.*

ERROR REPORTS:
Disk error indication with retry, abort or ignore option. If DOS commands are from Basic or machine code programs, the error code is stored in the Z80 register pair **BC**. To obtain the error code, a variable is set equal to the DOS command. The variable takes on the value of the error code on completion of the DOS command.



EXTRA FACILITIES:
RAM image copier for storing protected commercial programs on disk. Utility disk contains programs tapecopy and filer, which are disk utilities.
MANUAL:
32 page manual with TR-DOS V4 addendum does not make for easy reading. Includes advice on using DOS commands in Basic and machine code programs, error message coding, pin connections and explanation of disk utilities.
APPLICATION PROGRAMS:
None.
CRITICISM:
- Not so easy access to DOS commands from Basic
- Confusing doubling up of DOS commands and disk utilities
- Manual confusing with TR-DOS V4 update
COMMENTS:
Excellent value disk interface with random access facility and superb Ram image saver for games collection on tape (naughty but nice . . .)
MEDIA:
Depends on drives connected.
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS:
Number of drives supported per system: 4
Storage capacity: up to 640K (80 track doublesided)
Sector size: 256 bytes
Number of sectors: 16 sectors per track
TIMING:
Formatting: approx 35sec
Cataloguing: approx 2sec
Loading a screen: approx 3.5sec

MICRODRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

SIMON GOODWIN might be, in this first part of the new sub niche . . . ..

TECH TIPS gets underway gently this month with some software and hardware tips connected with Sinclair's most (in) famous invention before the C5 trundled along — the ZX Microdrive. I'll also take a look at two utility programs designed to bring the buzzing box to heel.

To start with though, a bit of history which might explain why Microdrives are not renowned as the most reliable machines since the sundial. When the Microdrive first came out (which was some time after it had been announced), it didn't always work too well. One minute a file would be present on a cartridge – the next, it would have vanished. Sometimes a file would load in the advertised 'seconds' – sometimes the drive would grind away for what seemed like hours before finally spitting out the hated 'File not found' message.

Newer systems are more reliable. This stems from further research, including QL developments and work by ICL on their Sinclair technology, QLyphone, not all that popularly known as the One Per Desk. The development of the Microdrive, both hardware and software, took longer than expected and there were a few rough edges on early systems. Indeed, exclusive Crash research (in both senses) has revealed that 'rough edges' were the literal causes of many problems.

There are two types of Microdrive cartridge. Early cartridges are distinguished by the presence of a four digit number on their upper face, near the pressure pad. Later ones (mid '84 onwards) have a number and the words 'REG. DESIGN APP.' on their surfaces. The later ones are substantially more reliable. Sinclair know this – in at least one case, after persistent customer pressure, they have replaced an entire set of early cartridges with the new type.

The difference stems from the way that the cartridges are moulded from plastic. The technique used means that one side of any plastic part is invariably 'rougher' than the other. The hot plastic has to be injected and ejected somewhere. This produces the 'sprue' — extra plastic which appears inside plastic boxes and has to be filed off model aeroplanes. The Spectrum and Spectrum Plus are moulded with this sprue on the inside so you can't see it. Unfortunately, the same was true of early Microdrive cartridges. Inside such a tiny box, even a small piece of sprue can cause jamming or uneven running — there's five metres of tape inside and the drive spins it at a rate of about 70 cms/second! This goes some way to explain the errors and weird crunching noises which often accompanied the use of early cartridges.

Nowadays, Sinclair accept that it is more important that the cartridges work properly than look pretty, and the sprue is on the outside of the box. Microdrives are a lot more reliable as a consequence.

FAST DRIVING

ICL engineers apparently contributed another small change which increased reliability of the drives. At first, the system used to start reading almost as soon as it was turned on. The new version pauses to let the tape get up to speed. New QL Microdrives are turned off and on more slowly than the Spectrum ones, reducing tape tension and improving reliability. This change does not appear to have been incorporated into the Spectrum – this author would be very interested to hear from any reader who has retro-fitted it. Anyway, here are some tips to improve the performance of your Microdrives substantially.

TWO QUICK TIPS

The Spectrum saves data on microdrive cartridges in the form of 'sectors', each of 512 bytes. Normally one sector is written for each part of a file, so they all have to be read to retrieve the entire file. However, you can persuade the Spectrum to save more than one copy of each sector. This means that your file takes up more space and you may have to use ERASE frequently to get rid of the duplicates, but the file may load much faster as it will take the system, on average, less time to find the information. Reliability can also be improved since the system can load in an alternative if one sector becomes faulty.

The number of copies is held in the system variable at address 23791. Normally the value is one, but you can POKE anything you like, so long as you remember that the space occupied by SAVEd files will increase proportionately. Type an extended command like CAT or CLS ¼ before POKEing a new value — this ensures the presence of the Interface 1 system variables.

Secondly, a tip to increase the speed with which the files are found. When a file is SAVEd, the system just writes the sectors into the 'gaps' between other files on the cartridge. If you are using one program which loads several others, it is advisable to have the files on the tape in the order in which they will be loaded. This minimises the time spent searching and can yield very impressive results. The trick is to VERIFY each file before SAVEing the next one. This way, the tape remains positioned just after a file, so that a subsequent SAVE puts the new data in the optimum position thereafter. This tip works best if you start out with a newly-formatted cartridge.

NEW WORDS FOR OLD

A variety of programs to enhance the abilities and friendliness of Microdrives have been published on tape, in books and in magazines. This month, I scrutinise the *Microdrive Doctor* and *The ZX Microdrive Auto-formatter* (the name is almost as long as the program).

Linkoln Tomlin's *Microdrive Doctor* is published on cassette by Softschool, 471 Hornsey Road, London N19. It is easily transferred to cartridge – you just hold down the 'S' whilst the tape loads and it is copied to Microdrive 1 automatically.

Two versions of the program are provided on opposite sides of the tape. One version is for users with early Interface 1s, while the other is for lucky people whose interfaces have serial numbers greater than 87316. Both versions occupy about 2K of memory at the top of the Spectrum's 48K. This will be bad news for those whose favourite utilities load into the same space as the code is not relocatable.

INTERFACE ONE And a bit of ROM rambling .

At this point it is worth discussing the various incarnations of Interface 1. In an apparent practise run for the QL (!), Sinclair made three different versions of Interface 1. The difference lies in the 'shadow ROM' which handles the Microdrive, RS232 and network commands. The first version was liberally laced with bugs: the CLOSE command didn't always work properly; FORMAT was none-too reliable; CAT and OPEN were slow and there were flaws in the network and RS232 handlers. The biggest bug was a faulty RAM check, which meant the machine could crash if Interface commands ran out of memory.

Version 2 of the ROM materialised at the beginning of this year. Large BASIC programs still crashed the system if you tried to load them into too small a space, but most of the other bugs were banished and the system was generally faster. The third ROM is similar to the second, but for small changes which improve FORMAT and compatibility with the QL network.

CALLING THE DOCTOR

Once the correct version of *Microdrive Doctor* has loaded, the screen clears and Softschool's copyright notice is displayed. The Microdrives work as normal, but several 'new' commands can be used by

prefixing existing commands with an asterisk. A tiny eight page leaflet explains the commands briefly but adequately, although it is a shame that there is no worked example of the way that Doctor might be used to recover files.

*MOVE is a straightforward and fairly fast utility which is designed to copy any cartridge. It transfers files from Microdrive 1 to Microdrive 2, so it is useless for those using a single drive. The other commands work with drive one only.

*CAT is a 'super catalogue' which displays the addresses, sizes and start lines of files, as well as their names. It is faster than the ordinary catalogue, especially as it displays the names as they are found, rather than reading them all, sorting them and displaying them later.

BIN displays 256 0's and 1's — each digit corresponding to one sector of the cartridge in drive one. A '0' indicates that the sector is free for use and a '1' shows that the sector is in use or unusable. The command does not seem immediately usable but the results are interesting to look at — you can see the way the Spectrum 'locks out' bad sectors and the way that saved files have their contents are scattered across the cartridge.

*LLIST is probably the most useful command. It shows the numbers of sectors which cannot be read reliably, first time. The Microdrive system tries to read sectors over and over again if they are badly recorded – the idea is that repeated reading will eventually give the correct answer. Old and unreliable cartridges have many such unreliable sectors, so loading itself becomes unreliable and slow. If *LLIST displays lots of numbers, you are best advised to copy the file onto a new cartridge before it becomes totally unreadable.

Irritatingly, the sector numbers are shown in hexadecimal. Maybe this is because a 'hex-print' routine is built into the Interface ROM. All other features of the Spectrum work in good old decimal, which a bunch of Arabs invented a few millenia ago and which most human beings have become used to by now. Perhaps Softschool would have used Roman numerals if the routine had happened to be in the ROM? Still, I can't really complain – I wrote a 'wrote a Roman Digital Clock' once! (*Very useful — ED*)

The last three commands allow you to examine or correct faulty sectors, using the numbers displayed by *LLIST. *CHR$ shows you the characters in a sector. *RESTORE attempts to rewrite a sector. This may mean that a few characters get corrupted, but the 'checking' information is put right so that the file will load nonetheless. *ERASE marks a given sector as 'free' regardless of its contents.

Microdrive Doctor will be useful to anyone who uses Microdrives seriously, for programming or data processing. Similar routines have been listed in magazines and books before but at £5.95, this compilation is good value and should save you a good deal of frustration.

The same recommendation cannot be attached to *The ZX Microdrive Auto-formatter*, from the Softshop, 59 Laburnam Road, Biggleswade, Beds. The idea behind the program is very simple – Sinclair say that Microdrive cartridges should be formatted repeatedly before use, in order to allow the tape to 'settle.' The snag is that each FORMAT operation takes about half a minute. This is just long enough to be irritating, without being long enough to allow you to do something useful while you're waiting. Hyperactive people are upset to find that they have to sit through the delay repeatedly, checking the space obtained and typing FORMAT over and over again to 'condition' a new cartridge. The *Auto-formatter* is a short BASIC program which formats the cartridge repeatedly, without human intervention. The capacity formatted is read after each try, so that the program can deduce the maximum potential space on a given cartridge.

So far so good – but I couldn't help noticing that the program resembled a listing from Home Computing Weekly No. 53, published nearly two years ago. I might not have noticed the resemblance had it not been for the fact that I wrote the original listing and an accompanying article about the vagiaries of Microdrives. Anyway, I decided to try to copy the 'super-formatter' onto Microdrive (Softshop charge an extra £1 to supply the program on cartridge). The tape version is 'protected' against copying, so it took about a minute to get the program file off the tape.

At this point my suspicions were confirmed. The program was an exact copy of my magazine program, although it did incorporate a 'help' screen. The sequence of commands, variable and filenames was identical to the published listing, which ran to just 29 BASIC lines including REMs. The magazine cost 40p rather than the £4.95 the Softshop are asking for a program they didn't write and couldn't even copy without screwing up the spelling!

Since I wrote the article, Leon Heller has pointed out that a cartridge formatted to its maximum capacity might be less reliable than one formatted fewer times, since the extra sectors are presumably the least reliable. With the extra advice in the magazine, the 'super-formatter' is just about worth 40p, although any BASIC programmer could knock up the code in a few minutes. At £4.95 from the softshop, it looks like a deliberate rip-off.

A BOOK AT BUGTIME

Before abandoning Microdrives, we should mention a couple of books which the keen Microdriver can use to pass the time as files load. The best technical book on the Microdrive is Ian Logan's boringly titled *Spectrum Microdrive Book*, published by Melbourne House. Logan actually wrote a part of the shadow ROM, and he reveals lots of esoteric information about the Interface 1 and Microdrives. Unfortunately, his contract with Sinclair prevented him from giving away a few details of the system but the book is recommended nonetheless for those who wish to use the Interface in machine code programs.

More readable and more practically oriented, is Andy Pennell's *Master Your ZX Microdrive*, published by Sunshine. This explains the workings of the system well, without becoming impenetrable and contains useful utility programs. The second edition includes details of the different shadow ROMs. Both titles cost £6.95 and should be available from most bookshops.

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Next month, we'll get stuck into the first TECH TIPS hardware project – a low cost interface guaranteed to strike terror into the heart of your ULA. In the meantime, if you have boldly POKEd where no man has POKEd before, why not share the experience with CRASH readers? Send your letters, postcards or strips of metallised toilet roll to **TECH TIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**

MORE MIDI MUSIC

Interfacing MIDI to MUSIC TYPEWRITER

In last month's NICHE, you were promised a review of selected MIDI interfaces for your Spectrum. We kick off this month, with a package from **Micro Musical** of Coventry who have come up with a MIDI hardware and a software add-on for **Romantic Robot**'s excellent *Music Typewriter* program.

We reviewed *Music Typewriter* in the May issue, where it was judged to be a program of worth, providing excellent graphics, and musical facilities including screen print out and memory space in which tunes may be stored. The editing facilities are simple and easy to use, and the only thing it lacked when we reviewed it was the ability to communicate with musical instruments. Now Micro Musical have come to the rescue. The addition of their MIDI interface and software allows tunes composed on Music Typewriter and saved to tape to be played on MIDI equipped synthesizers. All in all, a pretty logical package.

Once a tune has been created and saved to tape with *Music Typewriter*, the MIDI hardware can be connected to the Spectrum and Micro Musical's *MIDI Musician* software loaded. This provides further editing facilities and allows you to control external instruments via MIDI. Like *Music Typewriter*, it will only store monophonic tunes (ie single note sequences — no chords) up to 254 notes long. This means that it will only run in MIDI'S Omni Mode, as it only gives note information and no voice information. Because the package is designed to control any MIDI equipment, it has cut short on some of the possibilities that MIDI has to offer. Given more powerful software, per haps, other MIDI facilities could have been included, especially the ability to change sounds within the music you've written — but you can't have everything, can you?

The guts of the package is the interface which allows you to plug in MIDI synths, and also non-MIDI equipment such as drum machines. Any tune written into the Spectrum can be performed on a MIDI synth, via the interface. The timing can either be run from the Spectrum itself, the synthesizer/single keyboard or a MIDI drum machine. You can also add drum machines and certain non-MIDI equipment via the 'sync' input on the interface to create an impressive array of sound. The editing facilities are thoughtful and comprehensive. High, medium and low registers on the synth can be selected, which in many cases allow you to play notes that the synth keyboard cannot reach. It will also allow you to change your masterpiece into any key. I was a mite niggled however, that the stated key of the demo tune was inaccurate.





David Thompson, the man who wrote the controlling software for Micro Musical's MIDI Interface package stands behind a tableful of gear under the control of a humble Spectrum in MM's music lab.

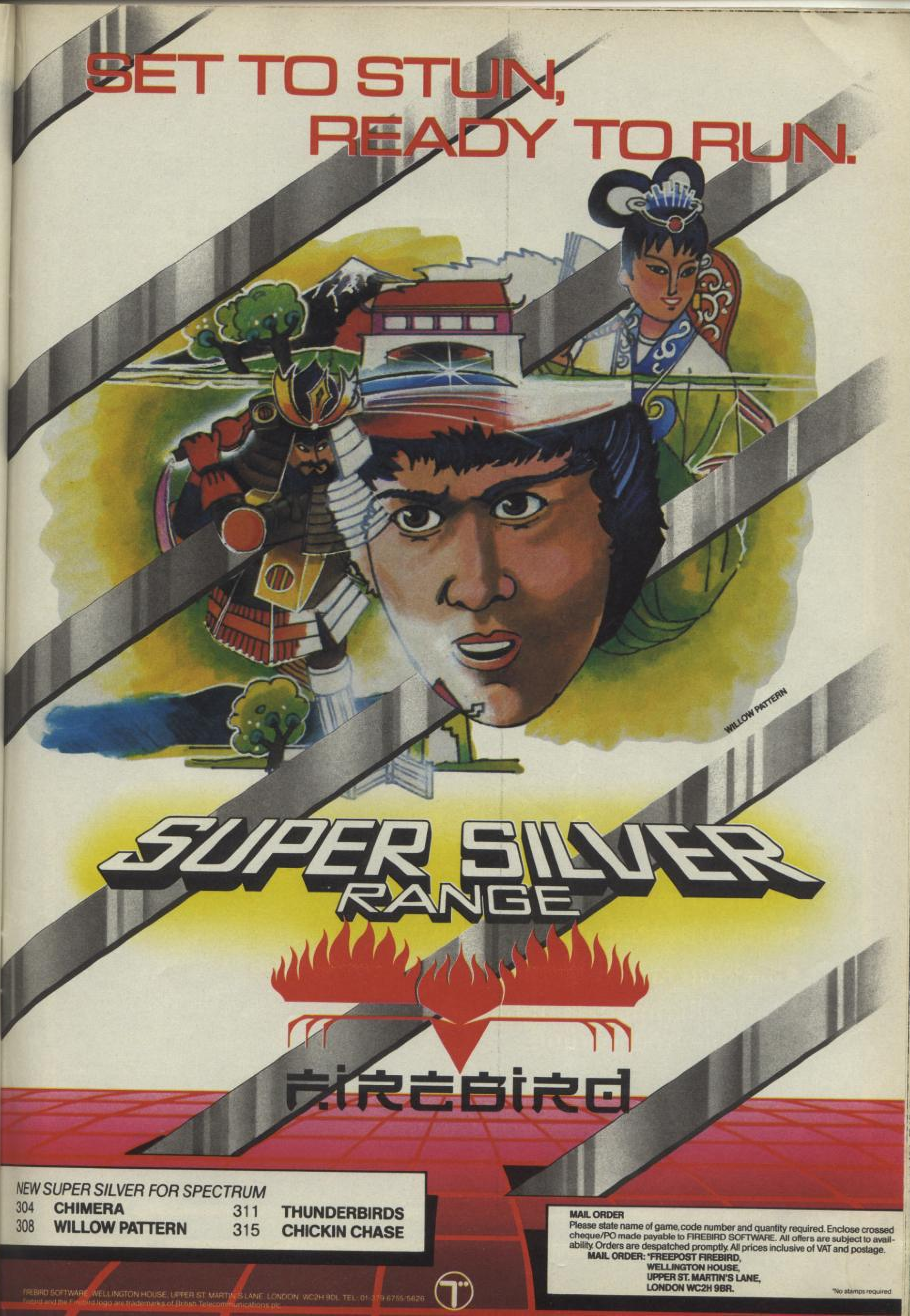
Minor faults apart, I particularly liked the inclusion of MIDI leads and the microdrive converter programs to the package which allow you to put both *Music Typewriter* and *MIDI Musician* onto Microdrive cartridge. A rare touch, nowadays!

The package includes everything you need to load up and go .... Generally, Micro Musician's software and hardware is a fine addition to an already proven music program. In combination they give an excellent introduction to music and MIDI control. Micro Musical promise that more software is on the way for their interface, which will add extra facilities to *Micro Musician*'s repertoire — having lashed out your cash on the initial hardware, there will be more software available to run on it.

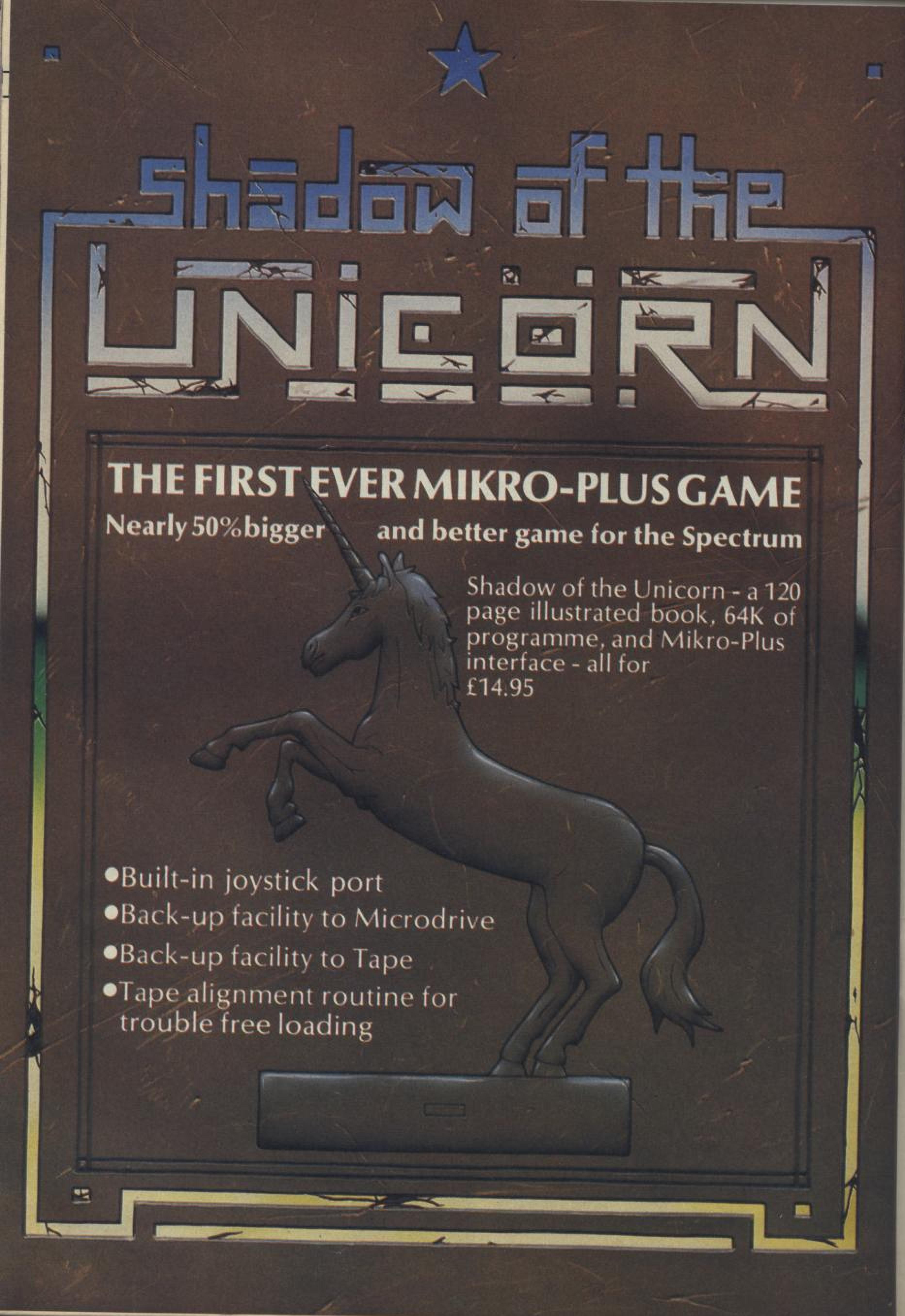
I don't think that Micro Musical are under any illusions that this system will be bought by professional musicians, who would be willing to lay out perhaps ten times as much for a dedicated system. For those of us with slightly less to spend, their package represents quite good value. For a little under £100 you get the hardware, and software to drive it including Romantic Robot's *Music Typewriter* and *Microdriver*.

When Micro Musical demonstrated their MIDI equipment to us, they used the Casio CZ101 to put the Spectrum through it's musical paces. The CZ101 is a very sophisticated state-of-the-art synth which has a five octave range with eight pre-set voices allowing you to create a lot of interesting sounds. This synth normally retails for around the £345 mark — and while we were there we took the opportunity to twist an arm or two. As a result, MM are prepared to throw their MIDI package in for free for CRASH readers who buy a CZ101 from them. They don't just make MIDI's you see, they sell keyboards too! Get in touch with them for further info . . .

MICRO MUSICAL LTD
37 Wood Green Lane, Shilton,
Coventry,
(0203) 616760



SET TO STUN,
READY TO RUN.
WILLOW PATTERN
SUPER SILVER
RANGE
FIREBIRD
NEW SUPER SILVER FOR SPECTRUM
304 CHIMERA
308 WILLOW PATTERN
311 THUNDERBIRDS
315 CHICKIN CHASE
MAIL ORDER
Please state name of game, code number and quantity required. Enclose crossed cheque/PO made payable to FIREBIRD SOFTWARE. All offers are subject to availability. Orders are despatched promptly. All prices inclusive of VAT and postage.
MAIL ORDER: *FREEPOST FIREBIRD, WELLINGTON HOUSE, UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON WC2H 9BR.
*No stamps required


shadow of the
UNICORN
THE FIRST EVER MIKRO-PLUS GAME
Nearly 50% bigger and better game for the Spectrum
Shadow of the Unicorn - a 120 page illustrated book, 64K of programme, and Mikro-Plus interface - all for £14.95
•Built-in joystick port
•Back-up facility to Microdrive
•Back-up facility to Tape
•Tape alignment routine for trouble free loading





DEREK BREWSTER'S
Adventure Trail

LULL BEFORE THE STORM

IF YOU LOOK through this month's column you will notice it is a good deal shorter than is usually the case. The Trail is short for the simple reason that the powers that be at Crash Towers either haven't received any new software this month or they are hogging it for themselves. True, I did spend some time at the Personal Computer World Show, where I sampled a moderate quantity of the ubiquitous DD beer and struggled in vain at the System 3 stand to see why such a large crowd had gathered. It was somewhat amusing to discover some time afterwards the crowd was caused by a scantily clad dancer. But once I got back home and put my legs up I could have quite happily played a megagame or two.

At the show rumours were rife but my legs were unwilling to check them all out — in fact I didn't check any of them out. This may turn out to be just as well because I'm going to mention what was there even if it wasn't.

The long-awaited *Lord of the Rings*, the major adventure based upon the major work by JRR Tolkien, is probably some way from completion. *Terrormolinos*, with very nice picture post card graphics on the Commodore, but none as yet on the Spectrum, looked very interesting and I'm sure will do very well on the Spectrum, so long as they can sort out their memory problems. *Sorderon's Shadow*, although the graphics look very similar to the *Midnight* Trilogy, is in fact more an adventure game with text input and some movement within the graphics. Mikro-Gen's *Shadow of the Unicorn*, would seem to be a similar sort of game, and is eagerly awaited due to its brightly coloured, highly detailed graphics forming over 11,000 panoramic views. You can travel only to the left or right of the screen, turning to enter other directions. The hardware add-on which is an integral part of this game is what makes it so special adding an extra 16K to the available Spectrum memory.

MADCAP MANOR

Producer: Gilsoft
Price: £5.50
Language: Quill
Author: Paul Styles



Every now and again a Quilled game is spawned which is a bit special, standing proud of the piles of computer cassettes which litter my living room floor. There was *Hampstead*, *Tower of Despair*, and now *Terrormolinos*. *Madcap Manor*, the game I'm reviewing here (in case you were wondering just what I was reviewing), must be a bit special seeing as Gilsoft, the originators of *The Quill* programming aid, have deemed this effort worthy of their backing. Without wanting to preclude the lengthy discourse which is no doubt about to follow (I say no doubt because it's a breezy autumnal day — my fave type of day —and I wouldn't mind stretching my legs in the local park to see how the one-legged duck is getting on) I would say *Madcap Manor* is not as original or entertaining as say, *Hampstead*, but is nevertheless a very worthy Quilled game.

Hampstead had no graphics, *Terrormolinos* should have had some graphics but *Madcap Manor* does actually feature graphics. Unfortunately their quality is borderline in the 'should adventures sport graphics and if they should, shouldn't they be of sufficient worth to add something to the game' sort of argument. You get the impression when you play this game that the same graphic keeps reappearing as many of the pictures are based upon a common simple design. In short, they are the sort of graphics which were alright over a year ago but now come over as very dated. With the likes of *Robin of Sherwood* knocking around and the state-of-the-art stuff to be seen on the new Amstrad, home computer graphics will never be quite the same again. What this means is great news for the computer art connoisseur and any art student who would like to try his hand at creating home computer software. It also means a lot of soul-searching within software houses and design teams to work out just what the ratio of pure programmers to arty types should be.

The type of adventure we have here would fall into the detective category. It stars a detective — and since Sherlock has already been taken how about Inspector Le Gles the famous Belgian detective. You are spending a long weekend with Lord Algernon Stingy who is not a West Indian DJ but a country squire tucked away in his deep rural retreat centred around an impressive Manor House. What's more, the times are quite comfy as well, it being 1933. Like some urbane Clousseau your Belgian nose is to be seen sniffing the corridors of this English haven searching for the Dowager Lady Ditchley's priceless ruby ring (that word priceless dates this adventure, in these times of the money god everything but everything has a price). Stingy (as he would no doubt be called today) hasn't given you many clues to go on but has ensured you of his staff's full cooperation in your hunt for the missing sparklers.

You start in a very comfortable location — bed, but have not quite managed to achieve the state in which mankind is at his best, that is, in deep sleep. Reading a book (must be Mervyn Peake) seems to do the trick and on waking your quest can beginin earnest. Your quest is in fact played out within your dream which is born out by your awakening should something nasty happen to you (and nothing could be nastier than what



happens to you when the rats get up your trousers).

Looking in the mirror sets off a weak joke about reflecting on the case but moving on you will quickly come to the scene of the theft, The Arabian Room. Before I forget, I must tell you that this adventure actually comes in two parts, a bit like *Deeds of Glengarry Hall* which is also reviewed this month, only in this case sides A and B carry the same adventure. Side B carries the text-only version for the puritans while A has the graphics with the necessary reduction in the amounts of text and the number of locations. I chose to review the graphics side A here because it is easier and it would seem more sensible to review the more commercial of the two sides. Now, where was I, oh yes, the Arabian Room, which is not full of sand but has a dresser and an open window. I couldn't get the dressing table open here, or exit the window, but on the whole this adventure is friendly and basically easy.

I've mentioned the graphics, and implied they leave something to be desired but let me just mention the billiards room where the scene comes to life when you switch the light on, just like in real life.

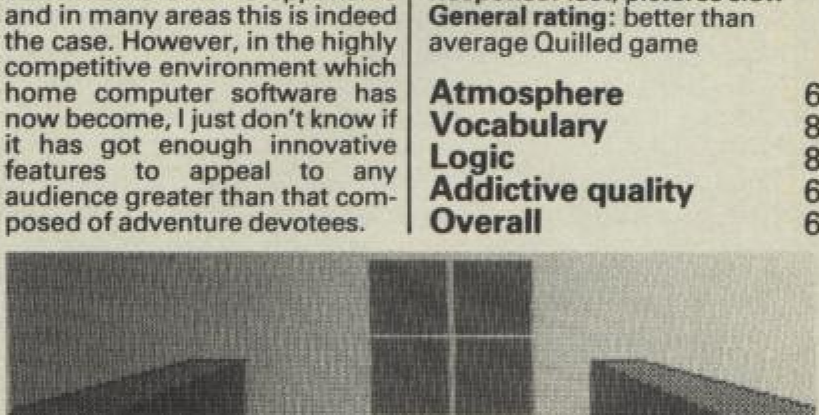
Madcap Manor is a Quilled game marketed by none-other than the purveyors of *The Quill* programming utility itself. Hence you might expect the game to feature one or two refinements over its opponents and in many areas this is indeed the case. However, in the highly competitive environment which home computer software has now become, I just don't know if it has got enough innovative features to appeal to any audience greater than that composed of adventure devotees.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy
Graphics: on some locations, very average
Presentation: good
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: fast, pictures slow
General rating: better than average Quilled game

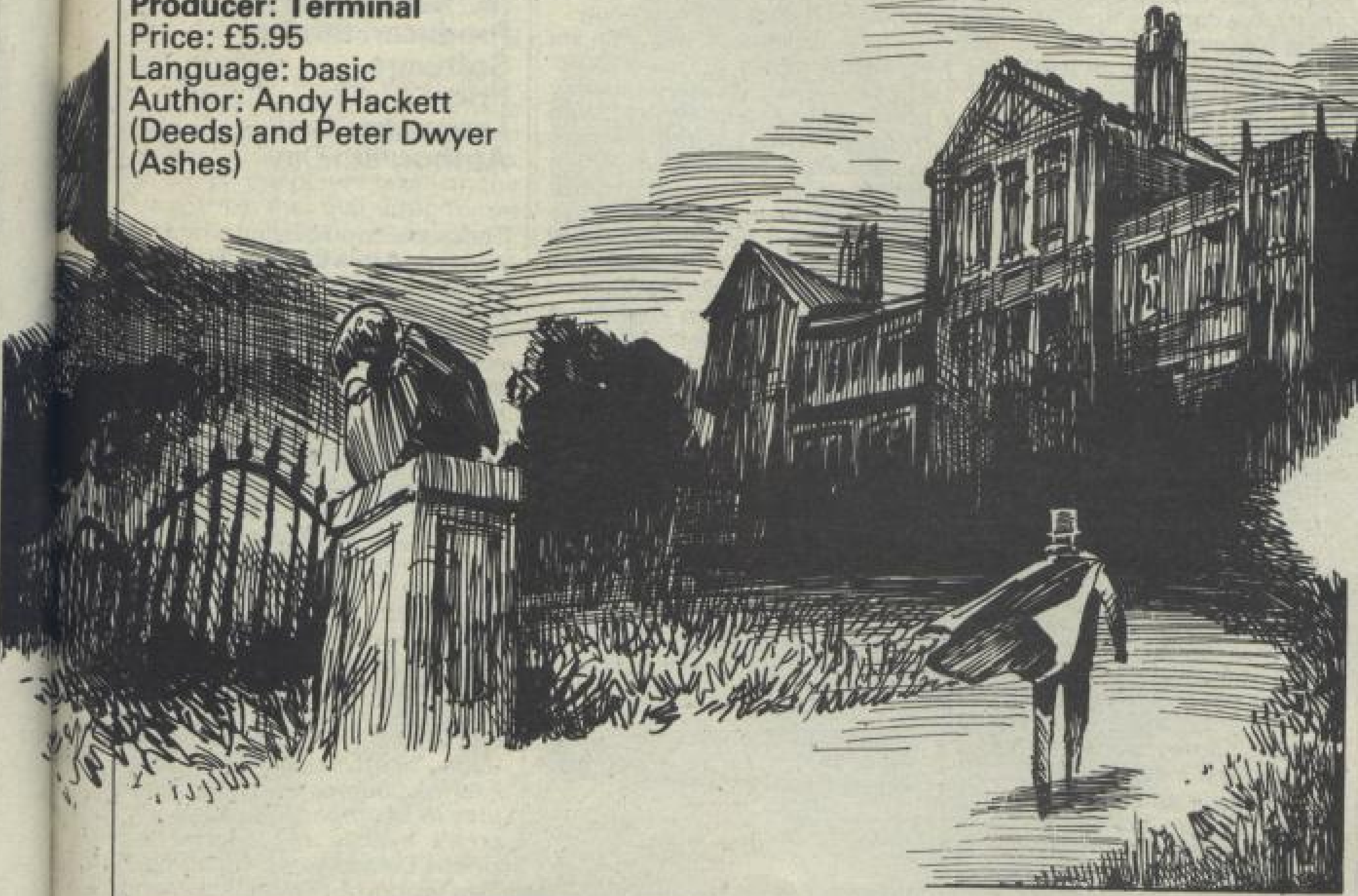
Atmosphere	6
Vocabulary	8
Logic	8
Addictive quality	6
Overall	6





THE DEEDS OF GLEN GARRY HALL

Producer: Terminal
Price: £5.95
Language: basic
Author: Andy Hackett (Deeds) and Peter Dwyer (Ashes)



I'm reviewing this game much as a music paper reviews a single. You see, this adventure has a flip side called *The Ashes of Alucard*. As is often thought the case with singles, the first side of this tape is by far the more commercial as it sports graphics which are simple but effective. The B Side is a very simple text adventure. Both adventures are unusual in allowing the explorer to wander freely throughout their respective lands. Solving problems is something attempted only when almost the whole advent-





ure is mapped out. This release represents the first in the *Merlock the Mede Pilgrimage* with a cassette carrying two different adventures appearing each month from now until Christmas. In their press release Terminal suggest side two of these tapes, the text-only side, will appeal to wallys and hardnuts alike. I couldn't help feeling a wally when I played side two of the tape.

So, if the games aren't up to much, what can Terminal do to arouse your interest. How about a competition? The series is linked by a competition. Each completed challenge yields part of the solution. With eight solutions and proof of purchase every adventurer can win a Terminal digital watch. I'll have to give it to Terminal, this is not a bad marketing exercise. My only complaint is that, as an adventure games reviewer, it may well have been better to send not the computer tape, but the digital watch!

Right, enough of this banter, and down to the sort of stuff I copy off the cassette inlay, partly due to review burn out (chiefly caused by reviewing so much drivel) and partly due to my struggles to understand a single thing that passages like the following are on about.

During Merlock's early childhood he was initiated into the ancient rites of the Medes. After many years of Medean mental development he became Keeper of the Medean Time Sceptre. As the Keeper of the Sceptre he must complete eight challenges successfully. Merlock will then possess the power to unlock the gates of the Forbidden Temple.

Actually, reading through that stuff as I wrote it out, it seemed to make just that bit more sense than is usually the case. A little more ambiguous is the intro to Side A. A small tavern, excellent game broth and potent ale. A young man with a personal problem needs help. The young man's personal problem is not the age old one (not washing behind his ears) but a far more worldly one — how to get his hands on his uncle's estate. He meets you, Merlock the Mede, in the tavern where he plys you with ale and tells you of how, although his Uncle Hamish has snuffed it after living out his days as a recluse in Glengarry Hall, the young man's attempts to find the deeds of his inheritance have come to nought. They must lie somewhere amongst the yards of corridors and acres of servant's quarters in the hall. As you play the part of Merlock you obligingly agree to help the man find his deeds and bonds in the hall. Presumably, in exchange, the young man will give you a digital watch.

Playing *Deeds of Glengarry Hall*, the more commercial of the two programs, you just can't help but get the feeling you are stepping back to a time when Spectrum adventures were in BASIC and response times were a subject of discussion. This adventure plods along slowly but is ridiculously slow when you're picking up objects or trying something the program has to think about. No beep accompanies your input and inputting a reasonable amount at the one location causes the picture across the top of the screen to scroll up and off. As has been pointed out in this column many times before such scrolling leads to the inevitable LOOK (to bring picture and location description up onto the screen once more) being used time and time again (REDESCRIBE is the equivalent in Quilled games).

If you are in need of a fruitless exercise try EXAMining everything in this adventure — and count how many 'I see nothing special' reports you can count. EXAMINE is not error checked so EXAMINE XXX brings the same response as everything else. A more sophisticated program would tell you that you cannot see an XXX. In general, the vocabulary is unfriendly and the program unhelpful.

It isn't just the program construction which is reminiscent of programs written over a year ago; the layout, presentation and feel of the game are dated. Everything is just a bit too simple and straightforward. Having said that of course, if you are new to adventuring you may well enjoy the game's accessibility.

The Ashes of Alucard on Side B is hardly an improvement on Side A. Whereas *Deeds* could be described as dated, this side surely must rate as positively backward. The removal of graphics has not made room for a more comprehensive text, quite the opposite, with very terse location statements. The fast response time raised my suspicions about this being a Quilled game and so indeed it is, as quitting for good puts up the perfunctory 'Bye. Have a nice day'. Perhaps first impressions are a little misleading with this one as once you get into it the game can be surprisingly resilient to boredom. There are a great assortment of nasties to deal with including a zombie, vampire, wolf man and many rats. Fighting these adversaries involves a quick combat sequence flashing up onto the screen. Whenever I played taking on a rat resulted in a kill (which puts one onto your score) or the rat running away.

Many objects to aid you are scattered about the adventure. These are heavy-handedly pointed out in true Quilled style by residing in a position beneath the location description. When picked up and displayed in your inventory the objects are colourfully depicted along with a small token graphic. Along with the frequent sound effects and good overall presentation one thing you can say is this game at least uses the Quill to good effect.

The first part of the *Merlock the Mede Pilgrimage* consists of two games: *The Deeds of Glengarry Hall* and *The Ashes of Alucard*. The first is a graphic adventure which is pretty run-of-the-mill and the second is a Quilled game with some nice touches but very terse location descriptions. Although neither game is anything special they may be worth playing in order to win a digital watch.

COMMENTS

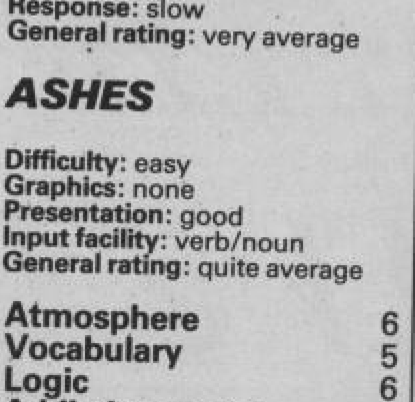
DEEDS

Difficulty: moderate
Graphics: average by today's standards but alright
Presentation: glaring white background
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: slow
General rating: very average

ASHES

Difficulty: easy
Graphics: none
Presentation: good
Input facility: verb/noun
General rating: quite average

Atmosphere	6
Vocabulary	5
Logic	6
Addictive quality	5
Overall	6



ADVENTURE TRAIL REVIEW RATINGS

ATMOSPHERE: reflects quality of location description and graphics and how credibly characters behave.

VOCABULARY: the completeness of the vocabulary and friendliness of response. All words and associated words (objects etc) in location descriptions should be included.

LOGIC: reflects the logic of the problems encountered and whether or not you are likely to be killed without warning or chance of escape.

DEBUGGING: indicates the level of crashproofing. A program should not be crashed simply by making an incorrect entry or by pressing an unfortunate combination of keys.

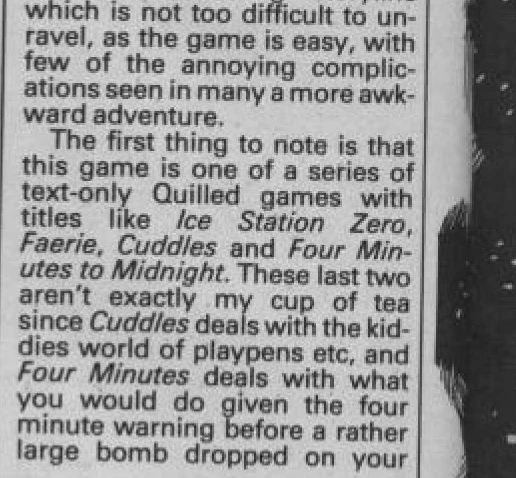
OVERALL: general rating based on price and the other ratings BUT NOT AN AVERAGE OF THE OTHER RATINGS.

QUANN TULLA

Producer: 8th Day Software
Price: £1.99
Language: Quill
Author: 8th Day

There are two reasons why I am reviewing this 8th Day Software program, which I received way back earlier this year, here in this month's column. One is a recommendation from an avid adventurer to play one and the other is the news that they sell for £1.99. If this price is true then *Quann Tulla* would seem to offer good value for money as it is a very friendly program. It also has an interesting storyline which is not too difficult to unravel, as the game is easy, with few of the annoying complications seen in many a more awkward adventure.

The first thing to note is that this game is one of a series of text-only Quilled games with titles like *Ice Station Zero*, *Faerie*, *Cuddles* and *Four Minutes to Midnight*. These last two aren't exactly my cup of tea since *Cuddles* deals with the kiddies world of playpens etc, and *Four Minutes* deals with what you would do given the four minute warning before a rather large bomb dropped on your



head. My advice is to be prepared and take a headache tablet.

Quann Tulla describes itself as being of moderate difficulty and has on its flip side detailed background information concerning games play.

Highly advanced robots, computer systems and automatic defence traps form the backdrop to this science fiction adventure in which the player takes on the might of the evil Empire on behalf of the ailing Federation. The battle takes place in the shattered hull of the flagship and finally to a desperate conclusion on a distant alien world. Secret manuals must be retrieved, an evil traitor dispensed with and a crippled ship destroyed before the Federation can govern in peace once more.



Quann Tulla is a long and reasonably easy adventure game with long, detailed location descriptions. It has a friendly vocabulary and fascinating plot. For £1.99 it compares favourably with other Quilled games on the market.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy — moderate
Graphics: none
Input: verb/noun
Response: instant
General rating: good

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	7
Logic	7
Addictive quality	8
Overall	8



FOURTH PROTOCOL

Dear Derek,
I thought I must write about that fab new game, The Fourth Protocol. I was so glad that you made it a Smash last month, and thought I would send you my tips for the first part: The Nato Documents.

Firstly, you will need some telephone numbers. A file in CENCOM called TELEPHONE might be of some help. In addition, you will discover some others during play:

SECURITY PSA 792 65856
BLENHEIM 043 82731
MEDICAL SECURITY 712 88989
SIR ANTHONY PLUMB 123 77563
PHONE BOX 0258 6141
TOOTING 179794433

When you ring Blenheim, the code of the week, which is given to you at the start of the game, is either FIREBIRD, PHOENIX or ROCKET. The files that you can find there include: MOD, NATO, PAPER 1, PAPER 2, PAPER 3, PAPER 4, PAPER 5, CABINET, FOREIGN, ABBS, BRACTON, THORN, FOX, MARAS, FAULKNER, DELIVERY, TRADE, NAMES, OMPARDE, BLODWYN, PIZZA and NILSON.

You often aren't allowed access to these files until you finish one job, or are given a definite lead, so you can't solve it all on day 1.

The initials on the NATO papers correspond to the names on the MOD, FOREIGN and CABINET lists. By a process of elimination you can make a shortlist of suspects which appear on all files. Throughout the game, you will be asked to do certain 'routine' jobs, which you will have to complete, if you want to keep your watchers. I have compiled a list in vaguely chronological order of the things which you are most likely to need to do...

1) Put watchers on ABBS and ALLEN and await results
2) When asked about Stanistav, simply choose the other suggestions and type 'defect' or 'turn' and when it asks, type 'Stanistav'
3) When the truth about Allen is known, arrest him, but don't use heavy methods of interrogation, simply transfer him
4) Ignore RESTON, NICKELS, and ADAMSON (BROWNING)
5) Put watchers on SOPWITH and change when Blodwyn comes up with the picture. Don't arrest MARAS, ignore him
6) Put watchers on FAULKNER, GENOVESE, and you might want to try out one of his Pizza friends. When the chance arises DO analyse voice recordings and try out a few names
7) When you are told about the news leak, analyse the papers, and when results come through, charge under official secrets act
8) Bracton is a shady character and most likely to have a nervous breakdown any moment. You may like to watch him, and then phone MEDICAL SECURITY, and tell them that you've seen him during satanic worship
9) When told about Warburton, tell his wife, and then her lover. When a watcher phones you from the call box, dig the object up, and inform the special branch.
10) Watch Johnston, and his friend, and when prompted approach Johnston
11) Fly to Stockholm, and read about NILSON. You might like to go to Borgafjall and go CLIMBING. Return to UMBA and visit HOLMAR'S sister. Examine his things and compare the fingerprint to the one shown earlier.

Edward Godwin, Speldhurst, Kent

Thank you for these tips, Edward, and for your diligent investigation you receive this month's £12 worth of software.

DB

Dear Derek,
I am a keen adventurer but I am having a few problems. In Signpost you give tips for many games but when I enter one of these commands the computer flashes up 'You can't do that yet'. What does this mean? Does it mean you need more equipment, you've entered the command too early or you've got to do something else first? For example, on the immaculate Gremlins your tip says WELD SNOW. When I've ever entered this it flashes up 'You can't do that yet'. I also sent for the Gremlins Hint Sheet. That says WELD UP CONTROLS. I put in this and it flashed up 'You can't do that yet'.

Also in The Hulk you say to get past the Anti Gravity location you have to enter BITE LIP and be The Hulk. But when I enter BITE LIP, I turn into The Hulk but then gas comes and turns me back again to Bruce Banner.

Please Derek, could you explain these points to me and also give some tips on Spiderman and The Hulk.

Andrew Walters, Derby

Well Andrew, in this instance it's a case of not having the necessary equipment to do the job. To weld the controls you will need a blow torch. As for The Hulk, ***you cannot remain The Hulk for long in the main area.***

DB

Dear Mr Brewster,
New and innovative ideas are injected into arcade games almost bi-monthly, while breakthroughs on the adventure scene seem few and far between. The first was the interactive adventure, witnessed in The Hobbit; then there was the animated graphic adventure, the award going to Valhalla (though I did not have a high opinion of the adventure as a whole); then finally, the latest breakthrough (or so it seems) is the Midnight series. And what now? Looking at the field on other computers, in particular the Infocom series, microdriven adventures seem the way forward, possibly using the networking system on Interface One.

To me, vivid and long descriptions distinguish between an adventure I'd play and one I'd persevere with, since to me immersion in a fluent and tangible storyline is true adventuring. Graphics are fine but only if they add to the aura and feel of a description. Speaking of which, many adventure writers think it sufficient to give a simple description such as 'You are in a small, dank dungeon'. Writing a description is like writing an essay; the five senses of sight, smell, taste, hearing and feel must be employed. How much richer the average adventure would be if only a few more adjectives were used. And for those who prefer sparser descriptions (sacrilege!) commands like VERBOSE and SPARSE could be built in.

So, what of the future? Microdriven adventures with larger vocabularies, more vivid descriptions coupled with a more fertile atmosphere, intelligent interaction and maybe more meaningful graphics, but the crowning glory will be networked adventure.

Shashy Dass, Hailsham, East Sussex

I agree with much of what you say here, although I'd say ikon-driven adventures are the latest breakthrough.

DB

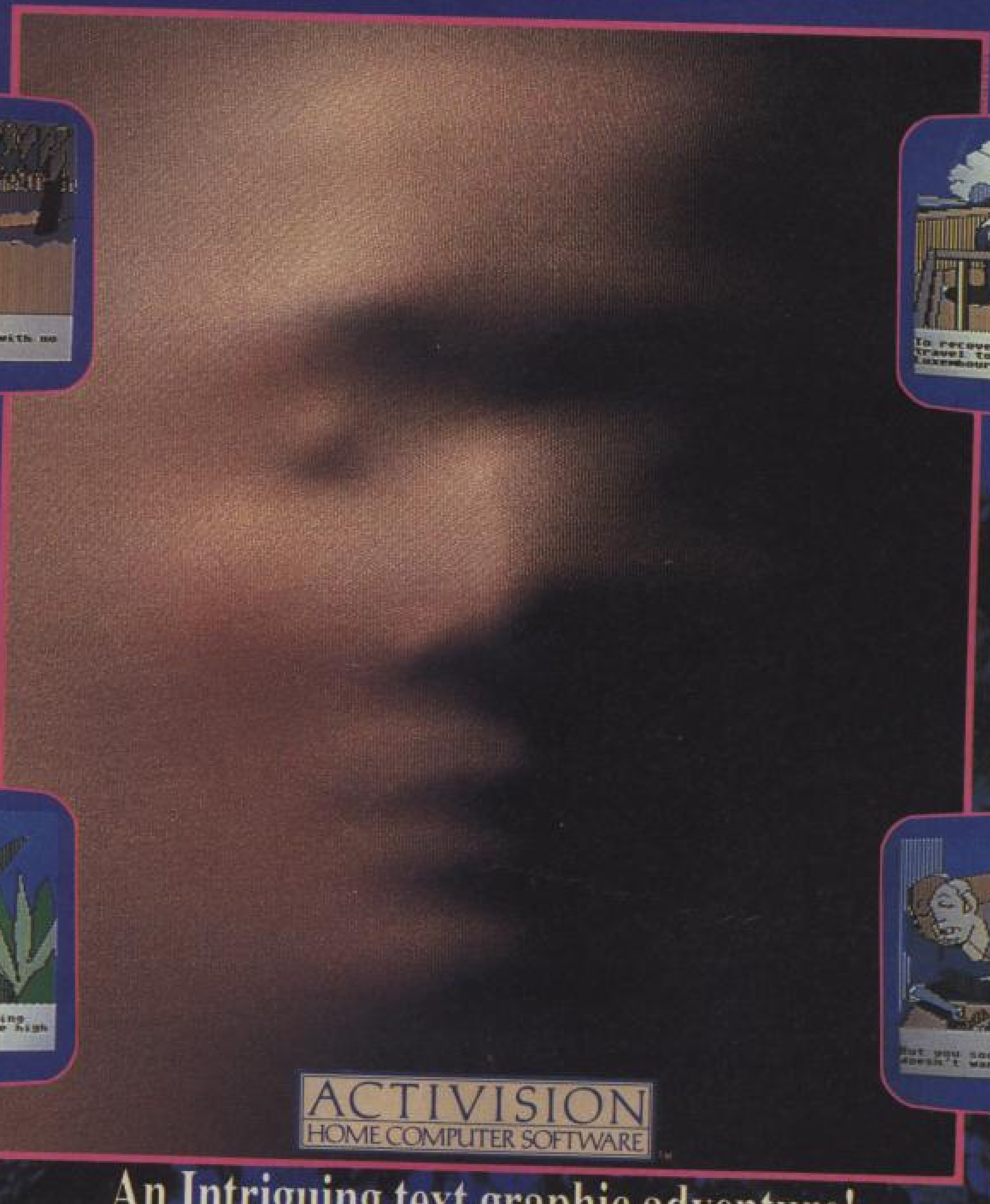
S·U·P·E·R·H·E·R·O·E·S

This month we have two SUPERHEROES. Mark Remuy ***from Romford completed Firebird's*** Subsunk ***at 7.31pm Thursday August 29. The game ends with a message: To: Fleet Command PRIORITY From: HMS Sealion Top Secret UK†US eyes only Format: Subsunk pos: sector 3 grid ref: 068† cg45b4 Status: On ocean bed - reactor critical. Capability to move nil. Request assistance of submarine rescue vehicle. CONGRATULATIONS! HELP IS ON ITS WAY - HAPPY ADVENTURING!!***

The other SUPERHERO is John Wilson ***of Rochdale who completed*** Warlord ***at 6.43pm on August 31. He's familiar, as he was a SUPERHERO for*** Witch's Cauldron ***in the September issue.***

MINDSHADOW™

WHO ARE YOU?
WHERE ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?











ACTIVISION
HOME COMPUTER SOFTWARE™

An Intriguing text graphic adventure!

You remember nothing.
You're on a deserted beach. But which beach?
You're going to find your lost identity no matter what price you have to pay.
Your perilous journey of discovery takes you around the world as it leads you ever closer to the truth about your missing past.
With a little help from the mysterious Condor, you move closer to the faceless betrayer who left you to perish.

"... superb graphics, in fact the best I've seen" Home Computing Weekly

COMING SOON
ballblazer.*

Available on Sinclair ZX Spectrum, Commodore C64 128 cassette and disk, Amstrad 464 cassette and Atari 800, XE, XL disk. From selected branches of Boots, WH Smith, John Menzies, Lasky's, Spectrum, Greens, Woolworth, Littlewoods and good computer software stores everywhere.

Mail order: Activision (UK) Ltd., 15 Harley House, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HE Tel: 01-935 1428

BEWARE, LOW FLYING SIGNS!

The Art department were so impressed with some of the entries to the Design A Sign competition, they insisted we use a selection of the winner's work on this page. Ross Goodburn is the only one to mention by name, cos his entries were real road signs!

No, he hadn't ripped down some of Her Majesty's Government's roadsigns, wrapped them up and sent them off to us. Ross bought some acrylic sheet from his school, cut it into roadsign-shaped pieces, masked them off and painted the red borders on and then made a stencil for the actual designs.

What a lot of effort! Anyway, here's some of the other winners' handiwork too. . . .

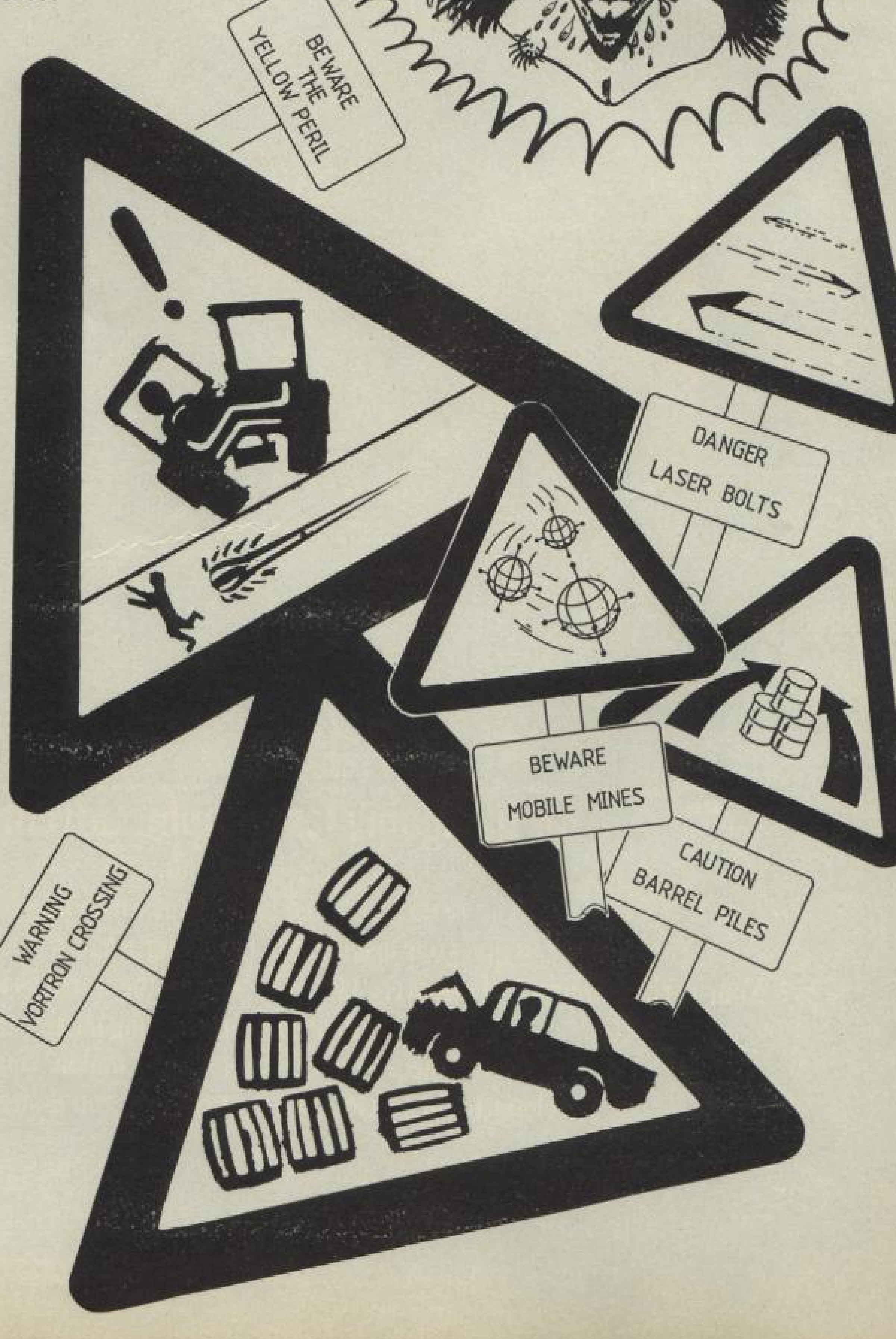


VORTEX COMP RESULTS

Interestingly enough our traffic warden — the Ludlow loonie who harrassed us endlessly whenever we tried to unload magazines — seems to have retired or something. So we don't need all the signs that you drew specially for us minions to put in the corridor of CRASH Towers. All that wasted effort! (Until the next warden's appointed, I suppose).

Top three chaps, who pick up a modem each are: E Taylor, Fairmead Road, N19 4DF, R Goodburn, Lichfield Road, IG8 9SY, T Haddock, St.Georges Road, WA10 4LA

Runners up, who should receive a Vortex goodie-bag soon, are as follow: R Alderson, Boxworth End, CB4 5RA; P Charlton, Pooley Bridge, CA10 2UQ; S Chipchase, Meadow Close, DH5 8HU; L Courtenay, Park Road East, L41 4BD; D Cousins, Church Road, LN4 1LZ; J Dalton, Styal Road, SK8 3TX; R Deaper, Hawthorn Cottage, CA8 2RN; C Dixon, Severn Grove, TS12 2LU; J Hucker, Sylvia Avenue, BS3 5DA; A Huggett, Woodlands Close, DE2 5DZ; J Lewis, Kilmun, Scotland; I R Mackie, Earl Of Bandon Avenue, Norfolk; R Maclean, Fairbarn Drive, S6 5QJ; M McKay, Oldham Road, M24 2DN; J Phillips, Waverly Road N8 9QU; D Porter, Bridgewater Road, NN13 6BY; A M Pugh, Birmingham Street, WV13 2HH; P Rudd, Kings Tanding Road, Birmingham; J Stoddart, Mile Ride, RG11 4JA; G T Stonnell, Hawk Close. MK45 1RX; K Ternent, Broom Hill, PL12 4DZ; D Young, Chiltern View, HP14 4HX.




£9,95
ROBIN OF THE WOOD

CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

T-shirts & Binders Offer



Great T-shirts in high-quality 100% cotton with double stitching on neck and shoulder seams for lasting wear. Three sizes, in black with a brill **CRASH** design in three colours.

£4.50 incl p&p

Fab **Sweatshirts** are long-sleeved, heavy quality and fleecy lined with double stitching on neck and shoulder seams for durability. Colourfast, machine washable navy blue with **CRASH** design in three colours. Three sizes.

£8.95 incl p&p

Chest sizes: (**S**)mall, 34in-36in
(**M**)edium, 38in
(**L**)arge, 40in

Our fat binder doesn't just look impressive with its silver blocked **CRASH** logo and dark blue finish, it's also strong enough to hold a year's supply of **CRASH** away from your friends! And it's **only £4.50** including postage and VAT!

Build yourself the most comprehensive manual on Spectrum software ever seen! Save your issues of CRASH month by month, and turn them into the hard cover with the fattening soft centre!

Be a Superior Alien with your very own CRASH T-shirt and sweatshirt!

Please send me ....CRASH T-shirts @ £4.50 **S**☐ **M**☐ **L**☐

............**Sweatshirt** @ £8.95 **S**☐ **M**☐ **L**☐

Please send.............**CRASH** Binder(s) at **£4.50**
(overseas orders please add 40p).

Name:..

Address:..

....

....

I enclose Cheque/PO payable to CRASH MICRO £..............
Please allow 28 days for delivery

CRASH MICRO, Freepost, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1BR

WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

NODES OF YESOD MAPPING COMP

Well mapped fellows and fellowesses. Lots of luvly entries for the Oli's Not Cheating **comp — and no, he didn't. Didn't need to, see, cos the nice Mr McKenna at Odin lent him the official Odin man of Nodes of Yesod, and what with the help of a few quick-off-the-mark mapsters who'd sent in Nodes maps before we'd even thought about the comp, there was no panic.**

Odin goodie bags containging Robin O' The Wood **should be whizzing their way to the following lucky winner type peoples. Don't panic if your baglet takes a weensy while to arrive — they're still putting the finishing touches to the game.**

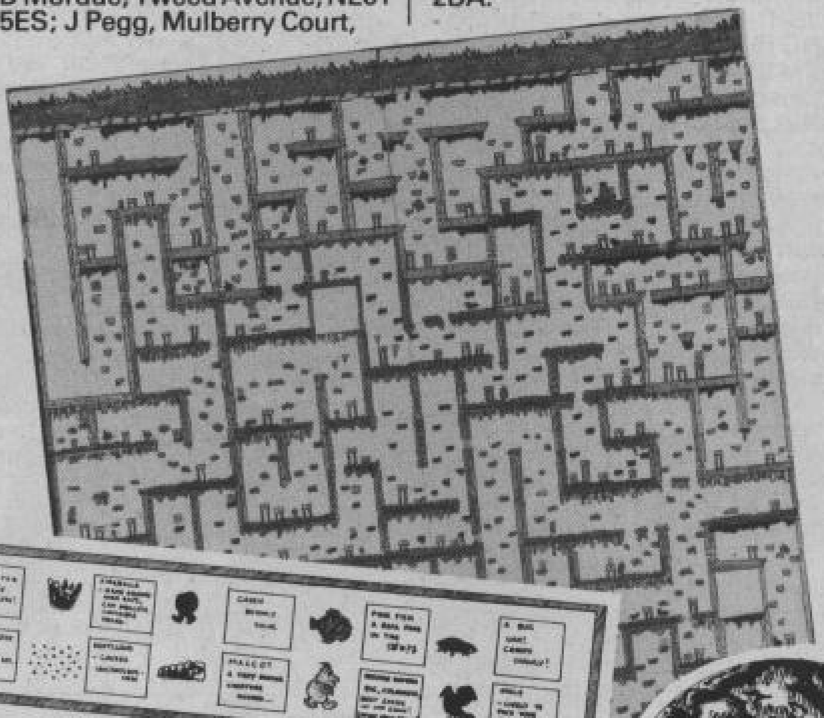
K Algar, Peartree Road, Essex; S Allen, Acacia Green, Cobblers Lane, WF8 2DY; A Bailey, Woodstock Road, SM5 3DZ; P & S Bamford, Tommerhytte, SL7 1RF; R Bartlett, Curlew Road, LU2 8EN; S Bell, Lynwood Grove, SK4 5OP; A E Bold, Towersey Drive, OX9 3NR; D Boston, Regent Park, KA9 1AQ; I Brown, Hopetoun Grange; AB2 9RB; A Brown, Primate Road, SR3 1RP; R Bryan, Kingston Place, SK8 6DF; J Buswell, Carmarthen Avenue, PO6 2AG; A Cawood, Daleside Avenue, LS28 8HD; P Davies, Penland Road, TN40 2JG; J Driscoll, Hilly Fields, Wiltshire; T Evans, Lindfield Avenue, NE5 3JJ; D Fisher, Melksham Road, Nottingham; A Garner, Merton Road, HA2 0AB; J Greenwood, Beechcliffe Avenue, HU6 7EF; D P Harper, Lound Road, NR4 7JQ; G Hawkins, Westmorland Crescent, BT20 3ND; M Howard, Trust Road, M18 7PJ; A C Job, Strathtay Road, S11 7GU; J Johnson, Ambury Hill, PE18 6JQ; A Jones, Cotswold Avenue, Northants; R Jones, Pentyla, CF34 0BB; M Jungerius, Franz Leharlaan, The Netherlands; J Lewis, Kingscote, BS17 4YD; J Mahy, Southwicks, SW13 9NH; N Martin, Midford Lane, BA3 6JR; D Mordue, Tweed Avenue, NE61 5ES; J Pegg, Mulberry Court, HP15 6RN; G Pollard, Merseyside; H Potter, Millstead Road, L15 8LE; S Radley, Rainsford Road, CM1 2PD; G Roberts, Sutton Avenue, L64 0TQ; A Sheppard, Ferry Lane, HU17 0SE; B Shields, Gilmerton Dykes, EH17 8JS; T Sims, Willow Road, HU12 9HR; P Smith, Henson Avenue, FY4 3LZ; D Steele & J Dicks, Tylers Avenue, CM12 0RA; R Stevens, Woodlands Road, SO4 2AF; G Taylor, Hartlebury Way, GL52 6YB; P Tomkins, Bourne Avenue, UB3 1QT; A Waldram, Water Lane, DN22 6SZ; A J Walker, Duddon View, LA16 7EP; D Webb, Jermyn Road, PE30 4AD; S Webb, Greenvale Road, SE9 1PD; C Wilkinson, Daleside Avenue, LS28 8HB; E Wilson, Plymouth Road, CF6 2DA.

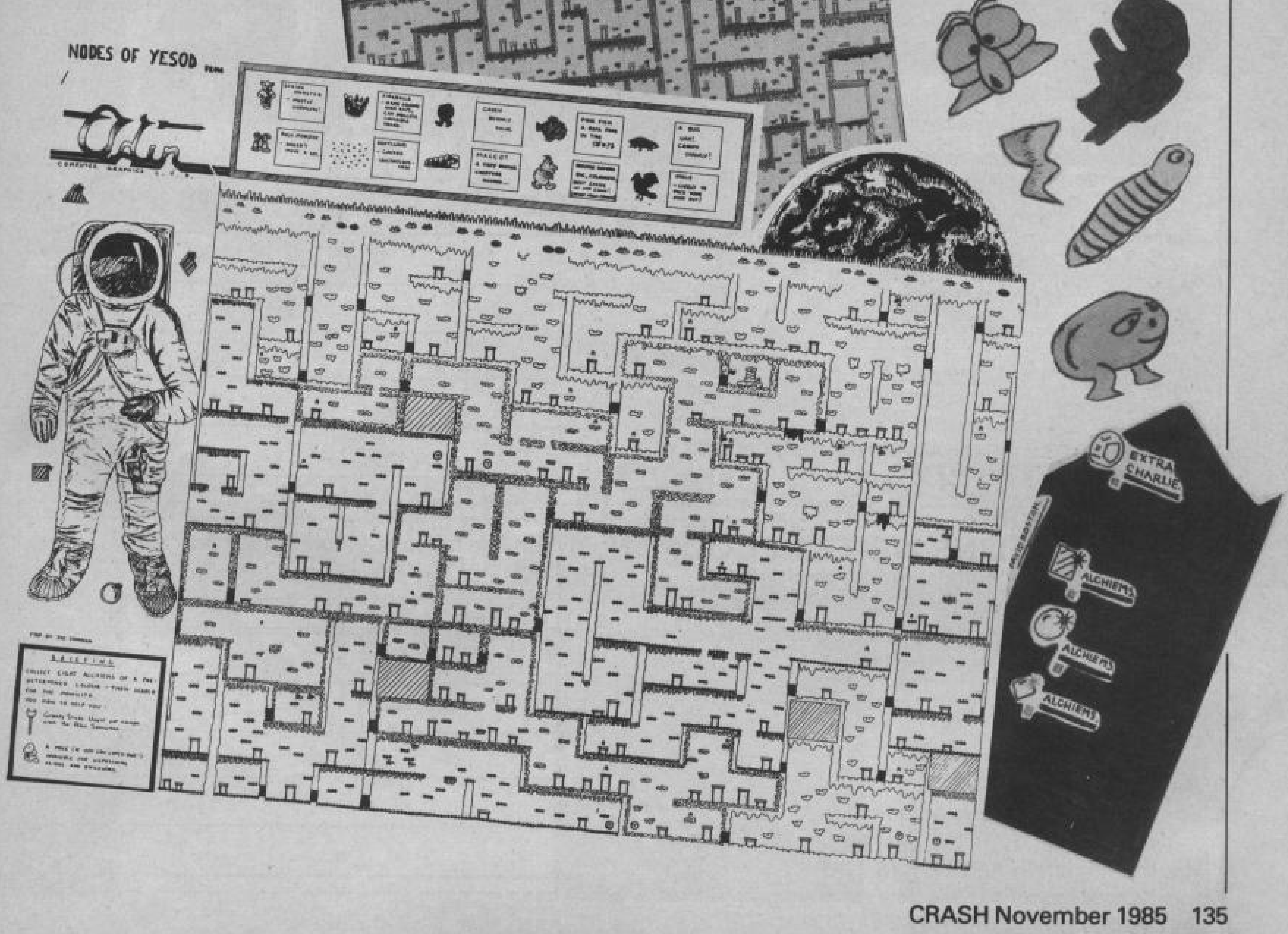
DAMBUSTERS COMPETITION RESULTS

OK, OK, so some of you smartie boots spotted this humble minion's mistake. Just because I knew all about the film title and forgot that the REAL Dambusters Squadron was in fact the. . . . No, I'm not going to say it. Something will only go wrong, and I'll be blamed again. Personally, I think you'd better look in the FORUM, where some show-off reveals his partial grasp of aviation history.

Here are the winners, who each pick up a copy of the game:

KAlldred, New Mossroadd, M30 5JQ; D.J Ballard-Adams, Newton Street, LA18 4DS; J Barns, Wolfreton Lane,HU10 6PU; C Belton, Dale Lane, NG9 4EA; P Bradbury, Hornby Street, BL9 5DS; S Britten, Hazeldene Road, NN2 7NZ; C Bussell, Ladycroft Paddock, DE3 2GA; A Carnegie, Stanley Street, AB1 6UT; D Carroll, Strathmore Avenue, HU6 7HL; D C Carter, Bransdale Clough, BD6 3JZ; R Fielding, South Avenue, M27 1RP; D Green, Theobald Street, WD7 7LT; P Gyles, Holly Close, PE30 3JH; T Haigh, Walmley Road, B76 8PH; A J Logie-Campbell, Kipling Road, GL51 7DJ; J Lord, Sedge Rise, North





WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS



Yorkshire; A J Marshall, Strumpshaw Road, NR13 5PA; J F Masters, Welbeck Road, M30 9EM; P Neave, Antrobus Road, B21 9NS; N Palmer, Old Kempsmott Lane, RG22 5EN; H Plaskitt, Hayton Wood View, LS25 3AN; K Robbins, Derby; ASchofield, Highfield Road, BD10 8QH; P Scholte, Natt Glascote Heath, B77 2HQ; T Skinner, Glenedgles Avenue, LE4 7GB; S Surridge, Leppol Road, London SW4; P Wallis, The Moorings, NP9 7JD; O Whitehead, Park Road, S70 1QW; J Wiggans, Nine Elms, PR2 3HA; G Yeomans, Hed Sirhw, CF6 8TG.

GLASS COMP RESULTS

Two lucky winners will receive a hand made hologram created by Holografix for Quicksilva, plus a signed David Rowe poster. They are: A Slater, St.Martins Road, PE6 7QR and J Griffin, Doverdale Avenue, DY10 3BS

And these persons will have their very own signed David Rowe poster: D R Coleman, Gorlesbrook Road, RM9 6XX; M Edmonds, Lodge Close, SG14 3DH; T Oldershaw, Moorgreen, NG16 2FE; I Terry, Barn Mead, CM18 4SP; S Worland, Queens Close, CB2 5QN.
Not a lot of entries for this one!

As for the rest of you, well I'm well disappointed. It's quite obvious that CRASH readers can't play computer games if you ask me. I mean, simple little task like get as far in the rankings on GLASS and you all wimp out. Hardly an entry in sight. Disgusting. I suppose we'll have to ask Quicksilva if we can use the posters as prizipoos in the great parachute jump from the sky fund raising event....

PHONE-IN HOTLINE DISCONTINUED

Voting for the CRASH Hotline and Adventure Chart can no longer be done by phone — too many rude phone calls upset the neighbours! But don't despair, you can still cast your vote for the two CRASH charts, so long as you do it by post and use the coupons below (or a photocopy). Each month we'll still be drawing five lucky prize-winners out of the Hotline Vote Bag, and five more winners will come out of the Adventure Chart Cask. First coupon out for both charts wins £40 of software and a CRASH T-Shirt with four runners up from each sack of mail collecting a T-Shirt and a super dooper CRASH Hat.

HOTLINE VOTING - Your Favourite Five

It's as simple as ABC(DE)! All you have to do is list your favourite five programs, in descending order, next to the little numbers on the coupon and whizz it off to us.

ADVENTURE CHART VOTING

After much deliberation, we've decided to limit the number of games you can vote for on the Adventure Chart to five. No longer can you keep on voting for as many games as you like (or can think of). It's five adventure games only now, folks. You still need to give each game you vote for a mark out of ten, however, so we can apply a cunningly derived mathematical formula to everyone's votes and come up with the final ranking. Quite simple really, for you if not for us.

DON'T FORGET

The telephone number for the Hotline Phone-In has been discontinued, so don't waste your time and money trying to ring in Hotline or Adventure Chart votes. Postal votes only chaps and chappesses, on the coupons to PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB. If you want to save money you can pop the coupons in the same envelope as your competition entries — so long as you mark it MULTIPLE ENTRY.
Get Voting....

ADVENTURE CHART WRITE-IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

postcode

Send your coupon to: **CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five programs are:

TITLE	VOTE OUT OF TEN
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

CRASH HOTLINE WRITE IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

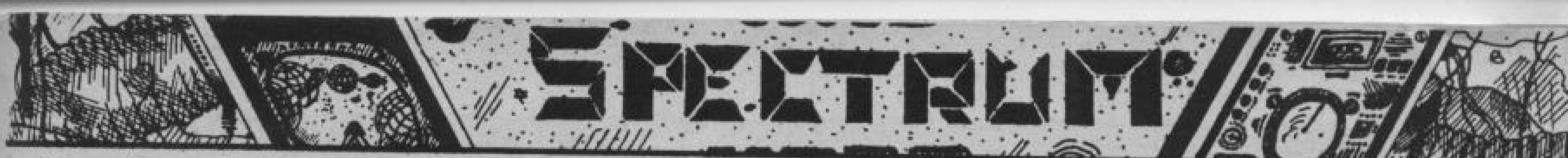
....

Postcode ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH HOTLINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

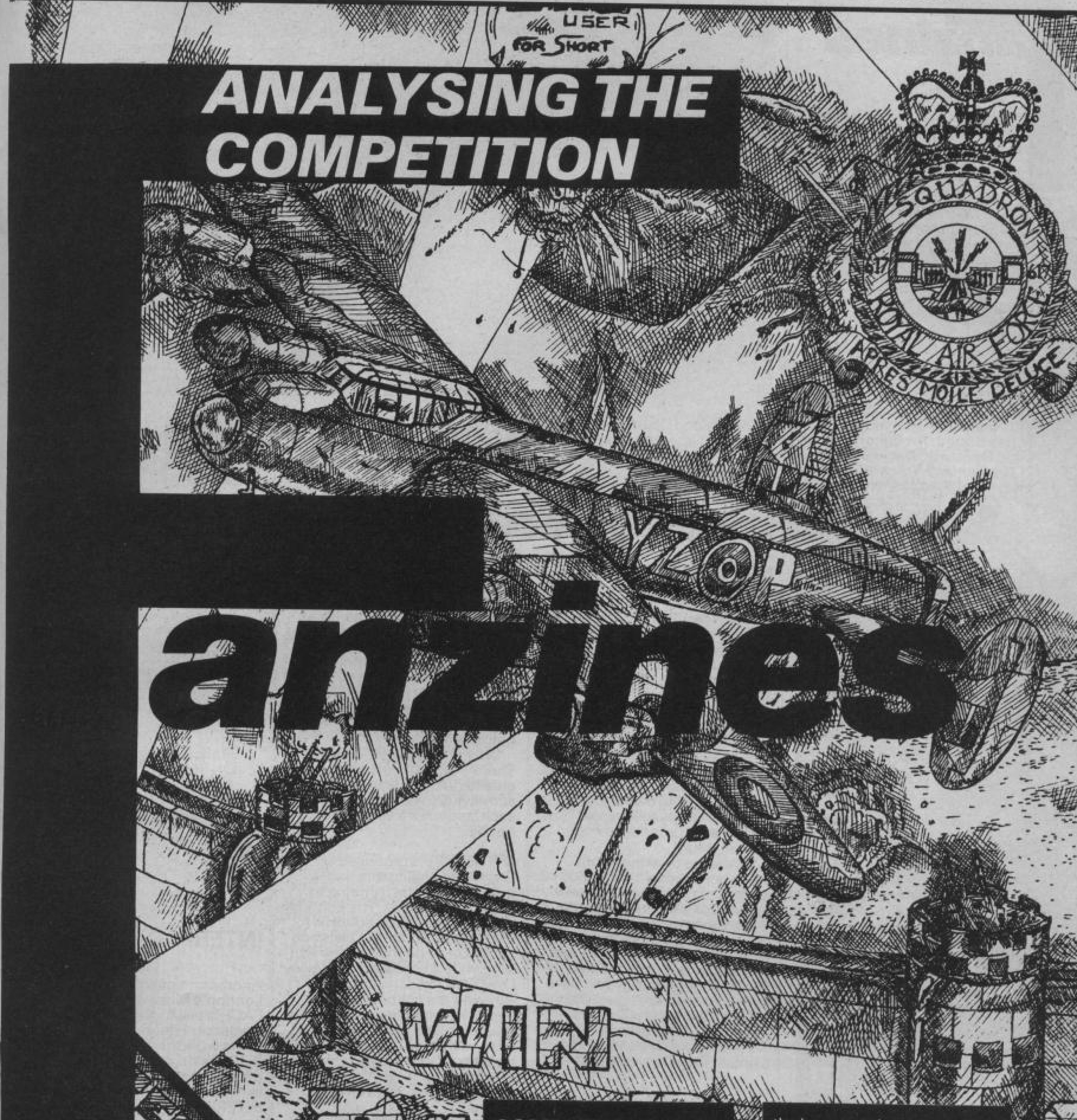
TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	



There's a whole world of computer magazine publishing which never sends a copy to a single newsagent. Copies of these independent magazines, produced by enthusiasts, are sold to friends, colleagues, relatives, strangers. . . . GRAEME KIDD takes a look a few Computer

ANALYSING THE COMPETITION

Fanzines



COMMODORE AND SPECTRUM USER

CAS USER is, without doubt, the most graphically exciting of the small independents we've seen. Running to some thirty photocopied pages every page contains at least one illustration from the pen of the magazine's art editor, Lhea Barrett. A busy lad indeed, for Lhea also does the layout, and cover design inbetween helping with the reviews.

The magazine is Portsmouth based and contains reviews, which are carried out by one person who initials the criticism and rates the game, on a percentage basis, on Graphics, Sound, Addictive Qualities, Playability, Value for Money and Overall. Competitions, the odd feature, a high score table, charts and tips complete the mix.

ANALYSING THE COMPETITION

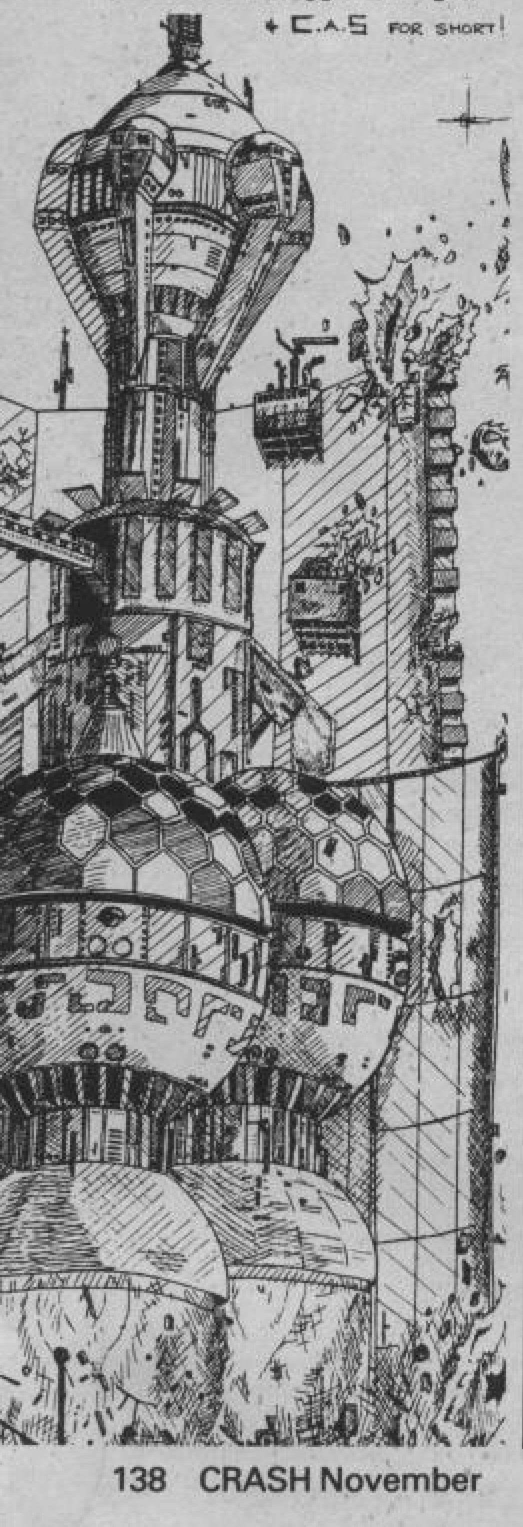
Fanzines

The CAS team are fortunate, in that it appears IBM sponsor them, assisting with the cost of photocopying. Thus they have the best of both worlds — the high quality of photocopied magazines and the low price — 25 pence — of Gestetner duplication.

Issue 4 of CAS should have gone to the copiers by the time you read this, and plans are afoot for a bumper Christmas Special, with a free poster! The full team line-up is as follows: Lhea Barrett, Art Editor, Layout and Reviewer; David Cook, Competition Minion and Reviewer; Gregg Mensingh, Reviewer and Distribution Supremo; Jon Ackerman and Bill Young, Commodore Reviewers and Playing Tips and News; Ben Linguard, Treasurer.



● The CAS USER team atop some poor fellow's motor car! From left to right: TOP ROW Ben Linguard, David Cook, Gregg Mensingh, Bill Young, BOTTOM ROW Lhea Barrett — centre —, Stephen Smith and Jon Ackerman.



THE BUG

We first met THE BUG at the ZX Microfair — they had a stall immediately behind us. Published by Bug International Publications, which is Jeffry Davy, Jaron Lewis, Alice Fage and Kelsey Lewis the magazine appears tri-weekly during school term (once every three weeks for those having difficulty).

THE BUG recently celebrated its first birthday and paid us a visit in CRASH Towers just before the party took place. They interviewed us, and we interviewed them!

"We were thinking about doing something", Jeffry Davy explained, "and came round to the idea of starting a magazine — we wanted one with unbiased reviews. The first issue was typed out in one day on a word processor, but since then we haven't been so lucky and have to use an ordinary typewriter. We decided to be a Spectrum only mag quite early on."

Finding the funds to pay for printing is the major problem faced by most of the small publishers we spoke to. THE BUG currently has a print run of some 80 copies and carries a cover price of 15p: "To begin with, we had some assistance from our parent with finance", Jeffry explained, "but by issue 5 we had to pay for the materials ourselves. Now any money we raise goes straight back into the magazine"

Why do they do it? "It's fun. There's the satisfaction of being able to do the magazine and get somewhere with it, improving it each issue. It's a very involved hobby."



● THE BUG is produced on Gestetner duplicators and is generally A5 size, running to some thirty pages. The Editorial Team writes a joint editorial for the magazine. Jaron Lewis and Jeffry Davis do most of the writing, while Alice Fage and Kelsey Lewis are the cartoonists. Reviews are conducted objectively, with two reviewers giving their opinions and rating out of ten and then an overall rating for games out of ten on Graphics, Sound, Originality, Value, Addictiveness, Keys and Overall.

The magazine is not all reviews, running a variety of features — such as interviews, news, and education corner and full page cartoons. As we went to press, we learnt that THE BUG team were expanding their range of magazines to include AM 'n' CHIPS for the Amstrad and RAMBUSTER 64 for the Commodore which will be published alternately at six week intervals. There's no stopping them!



INTERFACE

Another magazine produced in London's Muswell Hill, INTERFACE is also put printed on Gestetner equipment at the same workshop used by THE BUG. As might be imagined, there's a tiny bit of rivalry down in Muswell Hill! To be fair, INTERFACE did get the exclusive on the CRASH interview . . .

Lucien Randall is the Editor of INTERFACE and assisted by Dylan Banarse who's Assistant Editor. The dynamic duo are aided and abetted by a variety of staffers and produce a magazine in A4 format that has been as large as twenty six pages. Once again the magazine is Spectrum only and contains a lot more than just straight reviews, running interviews, news, tips, maps and . . . of course . . . the hard hitting editorial.





Game reviews consist of an introductory comment section followed by comments from Lucien and Dylan and ratings on an alphabetical system with supplementary short comments on Graphics, Sound, Lasting Appeal, Value for Money and Overall. Interestingly, loading time is also mentioned for each game.

INTERFACE appears periodically, priced at 15p



THE SPECTRUM GAMER

One of the youngest magazines in print, SPECTRUM GAMER is based in Crawley Sussex and began life in October this year with a small A5 taster which ran to some eight pages, and then sprang into life with the A4 sized September issue, some 38 pages which includes a fourteen page BBC GAMER supplement.

Spectrum gamer is put together by a trio: John Arthur, Editor; Simon Maskell, Assistant Editor and Competition Minion (sorry, Secretary); and Philip Wiltshire, Art Editor.

Reviews are written by one person, and give ratings out of ten on Graphics, Playability, Value, and Overall. There's a monthly 'Star Game' and, perhaps a little cruelly, there's also a 'Mush of the Month' section, where reviews of the worst game/s of the month appear!

As usual, the magazine is not all reviews — a feature in Issue 2 compares olympic event games with one another, and there's a quiz, and prize crossword to keep readers amused. While SPECTRUM GAMER is photocopied, which leads to a much better quality of reproduction than that enjoyed (or suffered) by THE BUG and INTERFACE, it costs rather more. Issue one cost 20p, while Issue 2 has a cover price of 60p



● John Arthur, Editor



● Simon Maskell, Assistant Editor



● Philip Wiltshire, Art Editor



MDAS
Match Day Appreciation Society

We've got an exclusive on this one! Joe Waldron, the one man band who's put together MDAS up in Merseyside has only just finished the first issue of his magazine. As you might imagine from the title, Joe is an avid admirer of *Match Day* — which gets a good review in his first issue which carries a comparative review of the other football games on the market.

But it's not going to be all *Match Day 1, Joe assures his readers in the editorial. Issue One of MDAS contains a competition, locally produced software chart (MD comes 4th, so it's not rigged) and an opinion piece on the price of software.*

Reviews consist of one person's comments and a percentage rating on Originality, Graphics, Documentation, Playability, Ease of Use and an Average of the other ratings. He's still setting up, is Joe, and it's early days for his photocopied magazine — he hasn't decided a cover price yet for the eleven-page issue one! Oh, and his sister, Deborah, did the cover. . .

● Joe Waldron, Big Cheese at MATCH DAY APPRECIATION SOCIETY





So there you have it. A quick rundown on some of our competitors to be. All slaving away for little reward other than the satisfaction of actually putting their own magazines together.

If you produce an independent Spectrum magazine, why not send us a copy? We like to keep an eye on the competition, and who knows . . . someone might like to set up a clearing house for small publishers!

Interestingly, the biggest problem faced by these small magazine publishers is that of convincing software houses to let them have review copies of games. Apparently a lot of companies are wary of cowboys who ring them up and scrounge software for review with no intention of producing a magazine let alone writing a review. Well, software companies, the magazines we've looked at here all look pretty genuine to us. . . .

COMMODORE AND SPECTRUM USER
23 Wymering Road,
North End
Portsmouth
PO2 7HX

THE SPECTRUM GAMER
43 Paddockhurst Road,
Gossops Green,
Crawley,
West Sussex

INTERFACE
83 Lyndhurst Gardens
Finchley
LONDON
N3 1TE

THE BUG
28 Leaside Avenue
Muswell Hill
LONDON
N10 3BU

MDAS
62 Greenlooms Drive
Formby
Merseyside L37 2LR

FRNTLINE

SEAN MONTgomerY ON THE RUN MASTERSON, ponders on the morality of wargaming in general and finds himself fighting fires in olde London

IT SEEMS as if not only is it all quiet on the western front this month, but on every front. Horror of horrors, is this column going to disappear into oblivion just when I had begun to make it worth while reading? Maybe — but just on the assumption that it won't, I'll take this month's lack of review material as an opportunity to present a discussion for your consideration. It's a subject which many have discussed before but not, to my knowledge, within the pages of CRASH, therefore it shouldn't be redundant.

Consider the morality of wargames. When you load a wargame (no matter what the subject), your sole aim is to cooly and precisely kill people of conflicting ideologies. Many modern wargames bring this point closest to home with the subject of nuclear exchange. Now I'm not arguing that limited nuclear exchange is possible and that such a war could be won, but nevertheless do any of you pause before hitting the red button? Even in a game, would you rather lose before resorting to the most desperate means or is winning that important?

There are those who argue that wargaming is unhealthy because it breeds cynicism and calousness. Having been a wargamer for some years now, I often overheard conversations by table-top generals boasting about how they had won an engagement by 'napalming the lot of them' or 'nuking them and got away with it.' Then, in more conventional games there are those whose fumbling, incompetent handling of a situation causes them to throw entire units (or armies) away on lost causes. Or they fight to the death so they can say they have never surrendered. If you have come across any of these people, you can see why there are those who think the whole hobby is a perverse waste of time.

My argument would be that these boastful buffoons are the ones who have totally missed the point of wargaming. They are the egotistical bigots who exist in any society and have simply clung to wargaming to fulfil their need to sound superior. Unfortunately wargaming does attract rather more than its fair share of this sort. But wargaming, if it breeds anything, breeds pacifism. If there is any point to wargaming at all, then this must be it. Rarely does anyone win their first wargame. Instead they see their armies wiped out (usually by the computer) all because of the instructions they gave to their troops. They learn that it can be no fun to play with men's lives. Or perhaps wargames can show the futility of war itself. Certainly, from an abstract point of view, they can discipline the mind and encourage logical thinking. But never, never should they be used as a vehicle to revel in the grotesquerie of the real thing.

It may be that you decide to employ nuclear weapons in a game and that as a result of your actions you win. But it should be important to remember that if the game makes such a victory possible, then it is only reflecting the designer's philosophy and not hard fact. And the best, indeed ideal commander would be the one who could win a battle without any losses at all. That would be the most efficient and palatable victory. Obviously, as an ideal it is unlikely to be realised, even in a game. However, it can still act as a guideline and if you had to use even one small tactical nuclear device, it would have resulted in a phenomenal number of casualties. It should encourage you to find a better way next time.

I will leave you to consider this. I once had an Atari computer which meant I had access to SSI wargames (arguably the best home computer simulations in the world). I was playing *Reforger 88*, a tactical simulation of a Soviet invasion of West Germany, centred around the crucial Fulda Gap. I only won the game once. The East Germans began their advance and I immediately withdrew. The only combat which took place was air to air, where I fared well and suffered few casualties. At the end of the second turn, unopposed, the Soviets took Frankfurt. At this point, I called a truce. I was given a marginal victory.

SEVENTH CAVALRY

Producer: Black Knight Computers
Retail price: **£3.50**

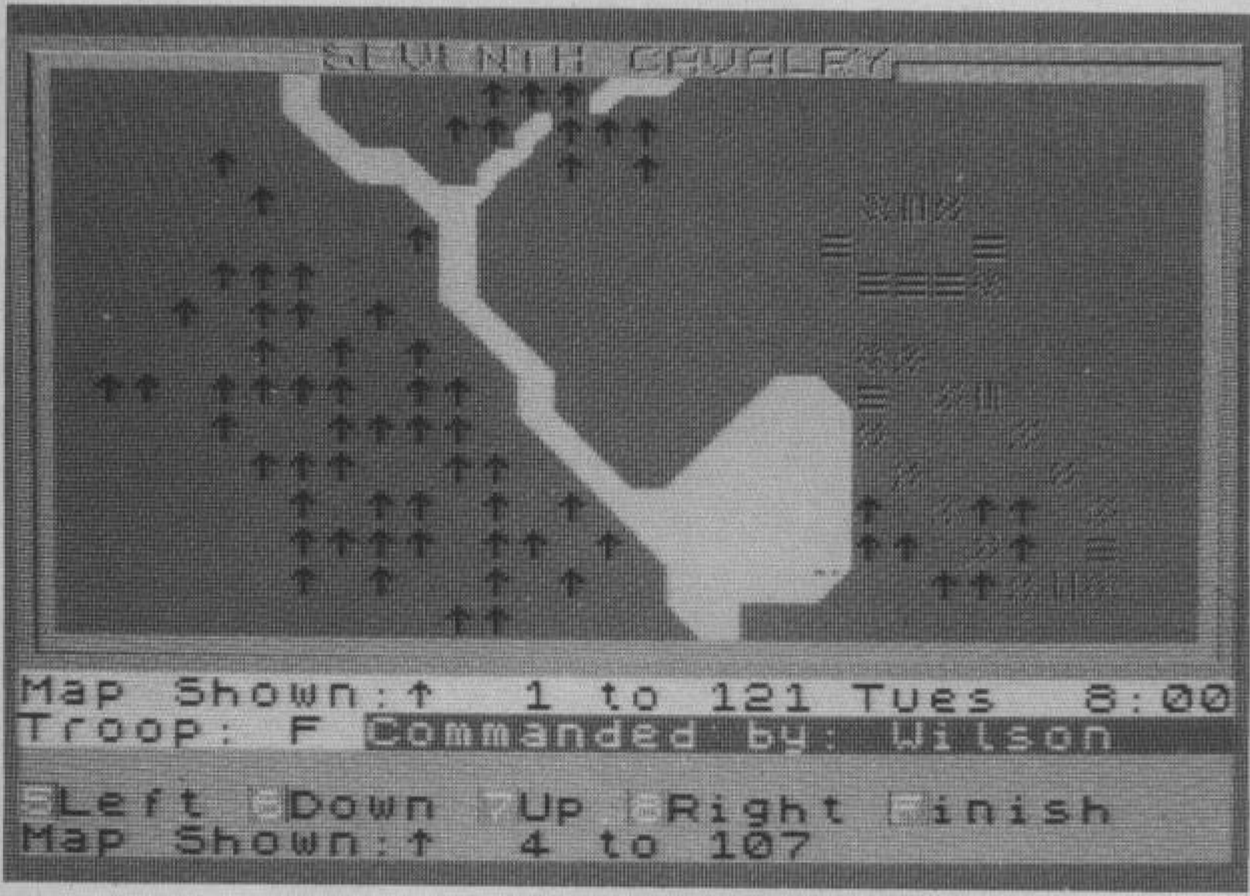
Black Knight have managed to find an interesting yet not over-killed subject for this wargame. Though it's not strictly speaking a simulation, it is a single player game involving the famous outfit's stand against overwhelming odds. As the version I received was only a preproduction copy, I had no idea as to what were the goals of the game, though these became more evident as time went on.

You begin the game in control of twelve cavalry troops, each of fifty or so men. The map depicts a fort (where you are based) and some of the surounding countryside. At the bottom of the screen there are several options made available, these being Move, Rest, Look, Position and Status. As the computer handles your units alphabetically, you can select each of these options for all the units so long as you make Move or Rest your last choice. Look and Position is a kind of game status update available at any point. Status displays all the relevant information about the unit currently selected and Move opens a further option screen for Charge, Gallop, Trot and Walk. Each one taking less energy to accomplish but also taking longer to achieve. Once you have selected the type of movement you require, you are invited to select one of eight different compass directions.

Your units are displayed as single blue coloured character blocks, each labelled alphabetically. When the Indian units appear, they are simply red blocks with an 'I' for easy identification. Each unit moves as soon as you have entered your orders and enemy movement takes place in between. Combat with adjacent units is automatic and a message window tells you how many casualties you suffered in that action.

The game takes place over several days and there is no option for a shorter scenario. However, there is a save game





facility, so you can play the campaign when you want to. Night affects playing conditions. Whilst I agree that it should, I'm not so sure that movement should only be at walking pace at night. Still, the idea is workable.

After suffering considerable losses on behalf of the United States cavalry, it became apparent that what was necessary was the destruction of Indian camps. If you travel far enough, then you find them as the map scrolls automatically when required. You need to destroy fifteen of these camps in order to win the game and this will take some considerable amount of time.

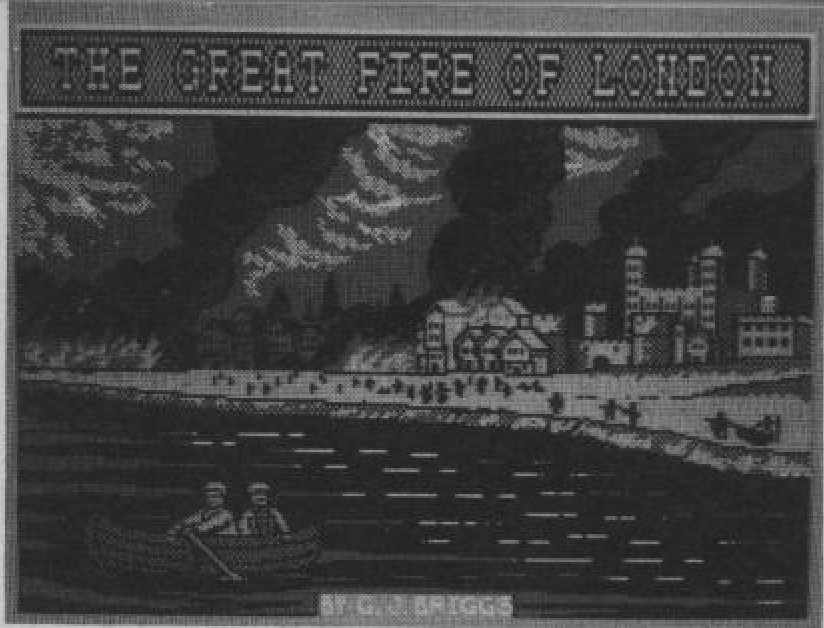
The game seems to play rather well and is not in the least sense pretentious or distasteful. The one feature which is annoying is the game's speed. Mainly because it is written in BASIC, it often takes several seconds to respond to keypresses. This can lead to some confusion over whether the game has indeed received orders for a particular unit and such distractions can quite easily become terribly frustrating if you play the game for several hours and from the few games played for this review, it does seem to be the sort of challenge to last for more than one day. Fatigue is handled extremely well, as speed of travel, terrain crossed and amount of time spent resting, are all considered.

On the whole, however, I found this game enjoyable and challenging to play and for £3.50 you could do far worse than add it to your collection.

PRESENTATION 59%
Unambitious screen display but not bad.
RULES 68%
Easy to learn and full of attention to detail.
PLAYABILITY 54%
Let down by BASIC programming.
GRAPHICS 53%
The best graphics are in the smooth scrolling map; the other UDGs are not too inspiring.
AUTHENTICITY 57%
Not really a simulation of Custer's battle but it treats combat and movement quite realistically.
VALUE FOR MONEY 67%
Some games like this are being sold at twice the price.
OVERALL 65%
Definitely worth a try.

FRONTLINE

THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON



Producer: Rabbit
Retail price: **£3.99**

This interesting new title from Rabbit (now under Nick Alexander's watchful eye at Virgin) puts you in the position of the chief fire officer at the time of the great fire in 1666. You have to co-ordinate the city's fire fighting resources and stop the entire city from being totally gutted. You have at your disposal several water pumps, demolition gangs and gunpowder gangs, each capable, to a limited degree, of stopping the fire from spreading. You can also make the wind variable and even give the fire time to spread before you actually start playing the game (if you like having your work cut out for you).

You can only take control of one unit at a time and you have to take it to wherever you want it to begin fire fighting. Some units are more difficult than others to control. Although I followed the instructions to the letter, whenever the water pumps were used, the main character was killed off. Water pumps need constant resupply from the rivers or they become useless very quickly. The various gangs you can employ also need to be recalled into action on various occasions.

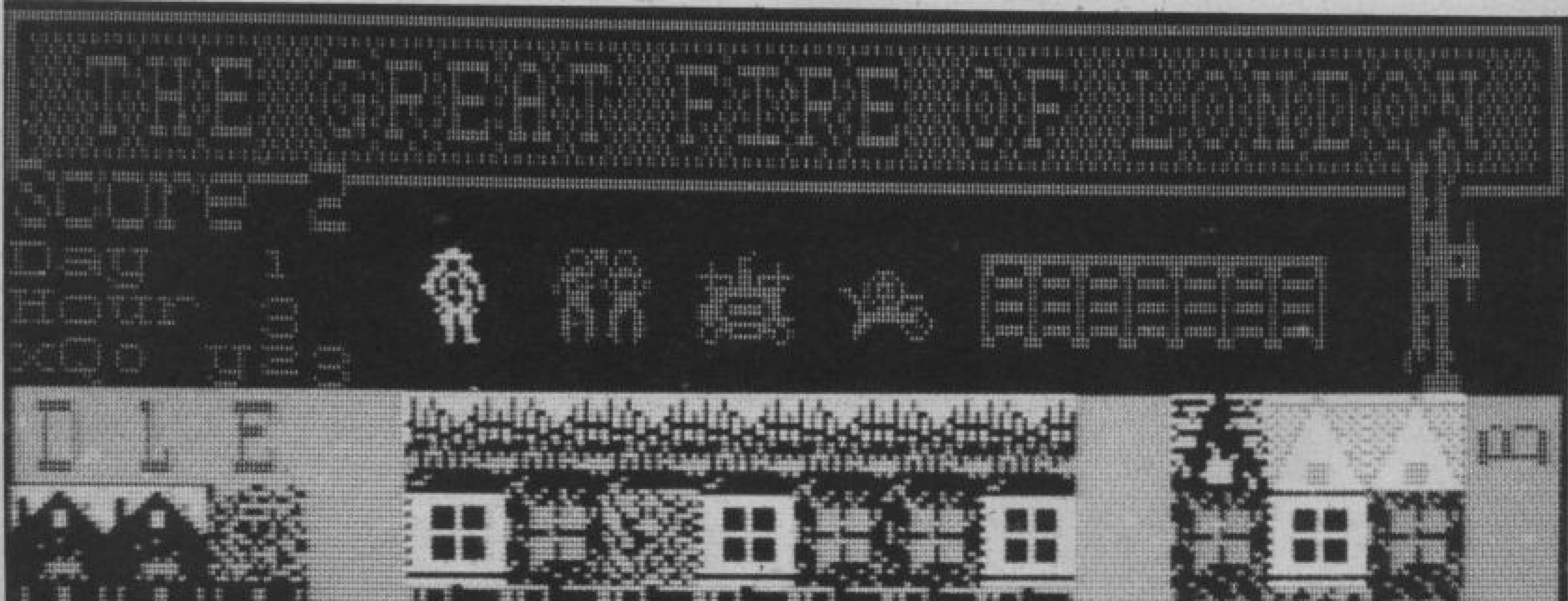
The screen itself is a large, smooth scrolling map depicting London in the late seventeenth century. The map is in full colour and all the streets are labelled in a redefined character set. Because of the rapid movement required (even on the simplest settings, the fire moves incredibly quickly) it is highly advisable to use a joystick (and there are several joystick options available from the main menu).

There is a great deal of rapid thinking required to figure out which places are the best to build fire breaks and how to deploy your forces, once you have located them all. Once the basic game is mastered, there are options for building and saving your own map, so this offers a great deal of scope for those pyromaniacs like Robin Candy out there.

The main faults with this game seem to lie with the ambiguity of the rules. All the time I was playing this game, I felt that I wasn't getting the best from my resources and yet there didn't seem to be any better way to employ them. This led to constantly having to restart the game as the chief fire officer repeatedly died in the course of his duty. Even though I didn't allow the fire to spread before playing, it spread incredibly quickly, presenting an almost impossible task for the beginner. Perhaps it's just me . . .

Having said that, it's one of the best presented and programmed low price games I have ever seen and it certainly offers something new for those weary with panzer bashing. If you keep your wits about you and a steady hand on your joystick, then this could be one of the best value for money buys you're likely to come across in the near future.

PRESENTATION 70%
Very atmospheric.
RULES 56%
Simplistic but still manage to be somewhat ambiguous in parts.
PLAYABILITY 65%
If you avoid using the water pumps, you should be alright.
GRAPHICS 89%
Very good indeed, for this type of game.
AUTHENTICITY 50%
Somehow I doubt it really happened this way . . .
VALUE FOR MONEY 73%
More professionalism and care than any other game in the price bracket.
OVERALL 71%
I still have reservations but the game has a tremendous amount to offer.



RED ALERT + RED ALERT + SCRAMBLE ALL BUCCANEERS +

ARM THUNDERFLASH MISSILES + FIRE ON MUTILES +





ORDER YOUR COPY NOW! To: INSIGHT SOFTWARE.
117 HIGHER PARR ST., THE FINGERPOST SHOPPING CENTRE,
ST. HELENS, MERSEYSIDE, ENGLAND. WA9 1AG

insight

NAME (BLOCK LETTERS) ....

ADDRESS..

COUNTY.. POSTCODE..................

Please send me .... copies of BUCCANEER at £ 7·95 including P&P in U.K.

I enclose a cheque/P.O. for £..................

YOU MAY ORDER BY ACCESS ☐ VISA ☐ BY POST OR RING

DURING OFFICE HOURS Phone: 0744 22013 Telex: 629487 BLUECH G.

Please debit my credit card.

Account No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Signature ....

INSIGHT SOFTWARE.
117 HIGHER PARR ST.,
THE FINGERPOST SHOPPING CENTRE,
ST. HELENS,
MERSEYSIDE, ENGLAND. WA9 1AG.

insight



CRASH MAIL ORDER FORM

Telephone Ludlow (0584) 5620.

Please send me the following titles: Block capitals please!

Title	Producer	Amount

Name. . . . .

Subscriber No. if applicable

Address. . . . .

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

Postcode

. . . .

All prices are as quoted under review headings or known retail prices and include VAT. Crash makes no charge for post or packing inside the UK. Customers in Europe should add the equivalent of 70p per item. Outside Europe: write first so that we may advise on postage rates.

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to CRASH

Sub Total: £

Less Discount £

Total Enclosed: £

SPECIAL DISCOUNTS

£1 OFF ANY ORDER WORTH MORE THAN £20

50p OFF ANY ORDER WORTH MORE THAN £10

Sorry – only **ONE voucher per order!**

CRASH MAIL ORDER, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

CRASH – SPECTRUM SOFTWARE



Retailers don't always have everything in stock you might want, but if it is within our power to get it for you, then we will. Any of the software reviewed in this or any issue of CRASH can be ordered using the form — in fact any available software that exists we will get for you.

CRASH has been supplying more than 100,000 Spectrum users with mail order items for over 20 months, so you can be sure of the very best in service. Where possible, orders are despatched within 24 hours of receipt and certainly within 3 to 4 days unless otherwise notified.

There's no mail order catalogue involved — just use the prices quoted in the magazine or the known retail price. If you have any queries just ring the number shown on the form and our staff will advise you. Anyone may take advantage of the discount coupons on the form which allow £1 off orders worth more than £20 and 50p off orders worth more than £10. Postage and packing is included in the price of the game.

Nothing could be simpler — fill in the form today and order whatever you like!

RE HEAVEN AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

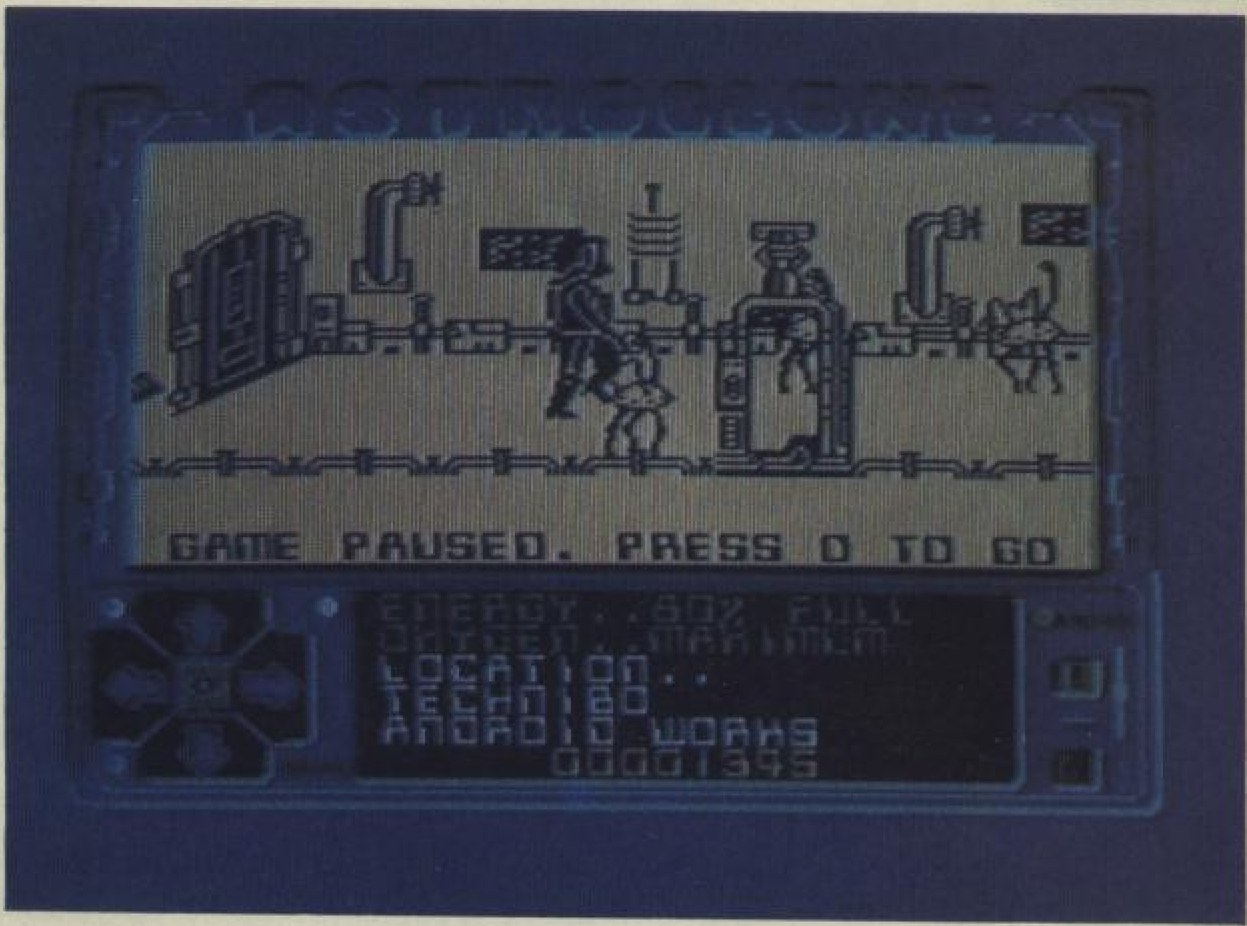
ASTRO CLONE

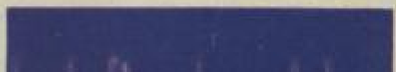
Producer: Hewson Consultants
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Steve Turner**

This is the fourth program in the *Seiddab* series and is in fact a cross between a shoot em up and *Dragontorc*, but then you should know about that from last month's preview . . . what do you mean you didn't see it? Get CRASH 21 **NOW** through the back issues form.

Just in case you didn't see the preview, *Astroclone* has three separate parts: a shoot em up sequence, a strategic element and an adventure section (where it's like *Dragontorc*).

The idea of the game is to knock out all the Seiddab bases







(in the adventure section); to shoot down Seiddab cruisers en route to the bases (arcade section). The strategic element of the game lies in choosing the route you take to achieve the overall aim.

You begin the game in a nice safe location, the Astroclone Assault Craft, in control of a clone — you can get the 'feel' of clone control in comfort before you begin the game itself, since there are no threatening things in the immediate vicinity. Don't hang around too long, however, as your oxygen supply is limited.

To operate the clone, you use an icon driven control system. Your clone can be in one of three modes: movement; arm and laser. Clone mode selection (good phrase, use it to impress friends) is achieved via an icon driven menu. In movement mode, you can scamper about; in arm mode it is possible to pick up, drop or use objects; laser mode puts a weapon in your clone's hand, and allows you to aim it with a cross-hair cursor and loose off shots.

The galaxy is represented on-screen as a series of 24 box-like 'sectors'. You can move from one sector to another by using a cursor to lock on to a space ship. You can then deploy it in another sector (perhaps one which is full of Seiddab). The strategic element comes into being here, as you try to decide where it is best to deploy your forces.

Once you're happy with your force dispersion you can then start fighting the Seiddab in the true old fashioned shoot em up style. Pick a sector where you want to fight and your ship enters it through a star gate. The shoot em up sequence is a *Defender* variant — the landscape scrolls from left to right and you can thrust, reverse and move up and down. The Seiddab cruisers are found zooming around somewhere. Just to make life that little bit harder there are other Seiddab artefacts zooming around in the sector. These include three types of smaller ship, homing missiles and Seiddab-controlled asteroids. These don't have to be destroyed to clear a sector, but it usually makes life easier if they are.

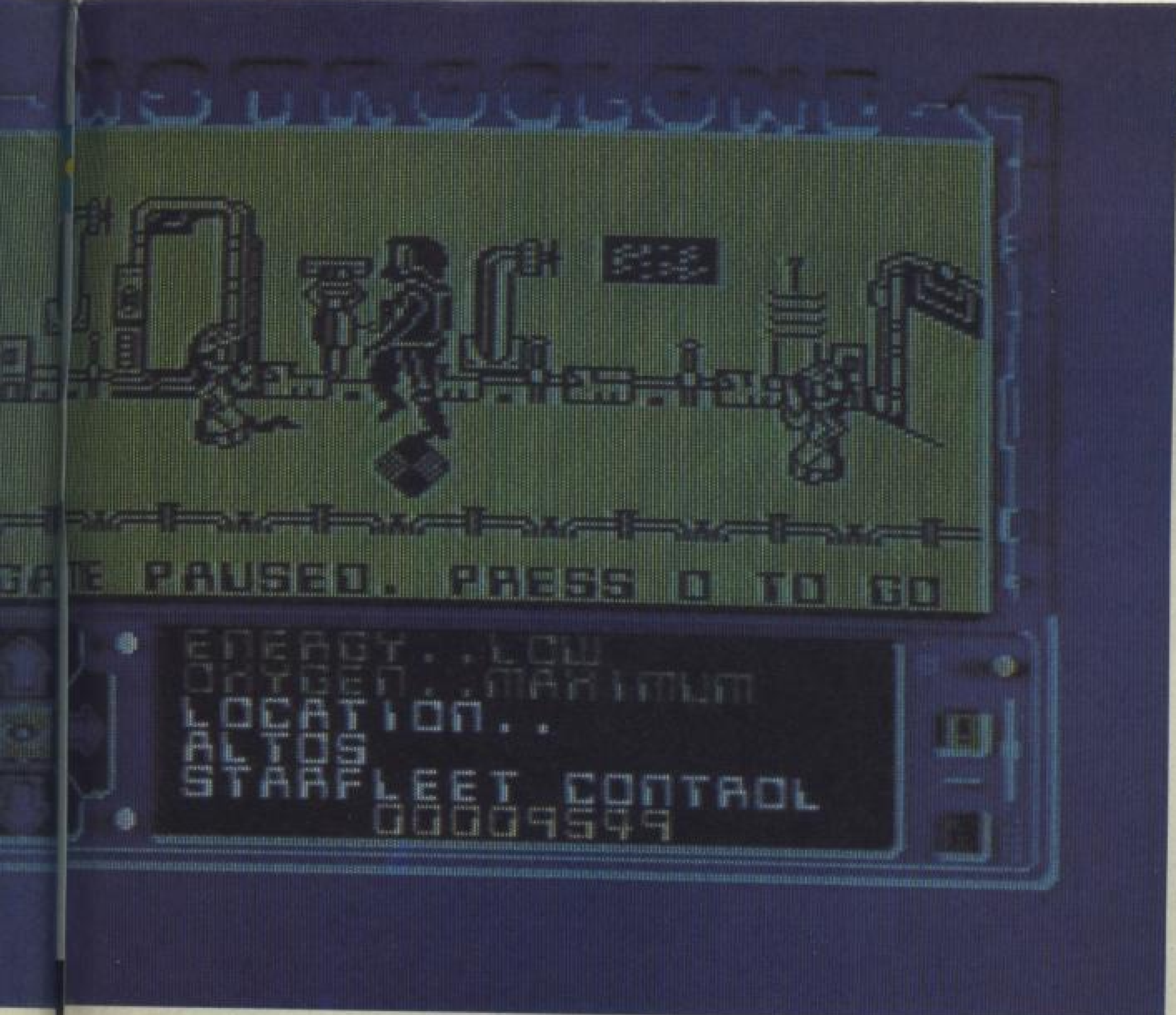
If you clear a sector of all the Seiddab cruisers and it has a Starbase in it you can enter the base by flying into an object that looks similar to a electricity pylon. When you do so you are put into the 3D arcade/adventure section of the game. Here you have to work out how to destroy the Starbase by using the objects littered around the place. Wandering around the Starbase are the actual Seiddab themselves. They look rather like mini Tripods and pose a threat if they get their claws into you. You can destroy them with your laser, though, so you're not too defenceless. Once you've destroyed the base you can go and try to find another Starbase which has to be destroyed in the same way.

CRITICISM

● **'It's nice to see several types of game all rolled into one and here the three separate parts have been combined successfully. The only trouble is that the game is rather repetitive and long drawn out. In the shoot em up part the gameplay is very sluggish and tedious — you just have to keep destroying the same old cruisers over the same old landscapes. By the time I'd destroyed about twenty cruisers an advanced stage of rigor mortis had set in. The graphics are fast but scrolling is quite jerky and the screen tends to slow down whenever any action takes place. The adventure bit is quite obscure, but if you like *Dragontorc* then you should be able to get on with it pretty well. The graphics aren't too bad on the adventure part, apart from being only two coloured and therefore rather bland. Overall the game didn't appeal to me because the whole game is very long drawn out and too samey to be rated anything above very good.'**

● 'I've played this one for ages now but I still can't see a lot in it. Graphically the 'Defender' scene isn't too bad although the colour is very garish and after a while of whizzing about the surface of Vaga I was completely mesmerized. As for the other part of the game, I didn't think it was that compelling. Getting into the space station is hard enough, and once I got there I walked around for a bit, got lost and then died. After repeating this several times I stayed clear of the stations and just went around shooting up the Seiddab ships.'

● *'Astroclone is the next logical step on from Dragontorc* and the Seiddab trilogy. The graphics are well up to Steve Turner's usual standard. The only niggle I've got with the game is that the defender variant part of the game is a little bit sluggish and can be a bit annoying if you want to rush headlong into the adventure part. If you liked Dragontorc *then you will love this game because there are plenty of problems to solve. Some of the bases are easy to destroy but others have a huge playing area a could take months to complete. Overall it is a very good combination of three totally different game types that should appeal to most Spectrum owners especially fans of Steve Turner's previous games.'*



COMMENTS

Control keys: Up A,S,D,F,G; Down Z, X, C, V; Left B, N; Right M, Symbol Shift; Fire H, J K, L
Joystick: Cursor, Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: keyboard control reminds of *Dragontorc/Avalon*, takes some getting used to, but works well
Use of colour: varied, although tends to single colour per screen to avoid attribute clashes
Graphics: very good, with excellent console
Sound: not too bad, nice tune at the end of a game
Screens: 250 plus
General rating: a strange mix of shoot em up and more recent Steve Turner arcade/adventure that should appeal highly to fans of the genre.

Use of computer	**86%**
Graphics	**87%**
Playability	**78%**
Getting started	**74%**
Addictive qualities	**87%**
Value for money	**89%**
Overall	**88%**

RIDDLER'S DEN

Producer: Electric Dreams
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Dave Harper**

This is Electric Dreams' first release (that's Electric Dreams as in Rod Cousens, not the other one) and features a brand new, up-and-coming star in the form of Trunkie the Manelephant. Trunkie has decided to set off on an expedition to find the legendary Great Golden God Gregogo. Who? Ah . . . 'Tis he who is as yet unseen.

Riddler's Den forms the first part of Trunkie's quest and is an arcade adventure in which he searches the Riddler's Den for a Golden Tusk — and the exit. Oh, and while he's wandering around the Den, Trunkie wants to collect and bank some treasure to fund his next jaunt.

Once found, the tusk has to be taken to the Final Room, which is in fact the room you start in! This isn't so easy since there are many nasty creatures blocking some of the entrances to parts of the den and thus further progress. A spider, gargoyle and three dragons are just some of the deadly denizens that need to be negotiated. So how **do** you pass them? By solving riddles and using objects correctly, that's how.

The chambers in the Den are shown from above while all characters are shown from the side — similar to *Sabre Wulf* if you like. Scattered about the Den there are numerous weird objects that Trunkie can pick up — and store in one of his four pockets. Some things can be **USE**d to good effect when placed in the fourth pocket, such as a pillow that allows you to rest and gain extra energy. Others should be dropped at the appropriate place and time to give the required result. To pick up an object you need to manoeuvre Trunkie up against it and press the key which controls an empty pocket. The object will be transferred to Trunkie's collection. Objects can only be **USE**'d if they are in Pocket 4 — and sometimes an object in Pocket 4 can be used on or with an object in one of the other pockets.

Objects which Trunkie has picked up are displayed at the top of the screen, next to a counter which keeps track of how much of the quest you have solved. A flask indicates how much energy Trunkie has remaining, and a digital clock running in gametime ticks off the hours . . . and you have a limited number of days in which to complete the tasks allotted.

Most of the chambers in the Den contain mobile nasties — goblin like creatures which materialise shorty after Trunkie enters and dodge around the floorspace. Larger ogre creatures live in some rooms and contact with ogres or goblins saps Trunkie's energy — some of them are quite intelligent and home in on you, while others manage to block your path very effectively.

If you spend too long in a room, a homing plant will turn up at the entrance Trunkie used and send out a spore, which bounces round in the room, sapping energy on contact. This is the Bloodhound Trap — which gets very nasty if you are in a room with one of the three dragons that feature in the game.

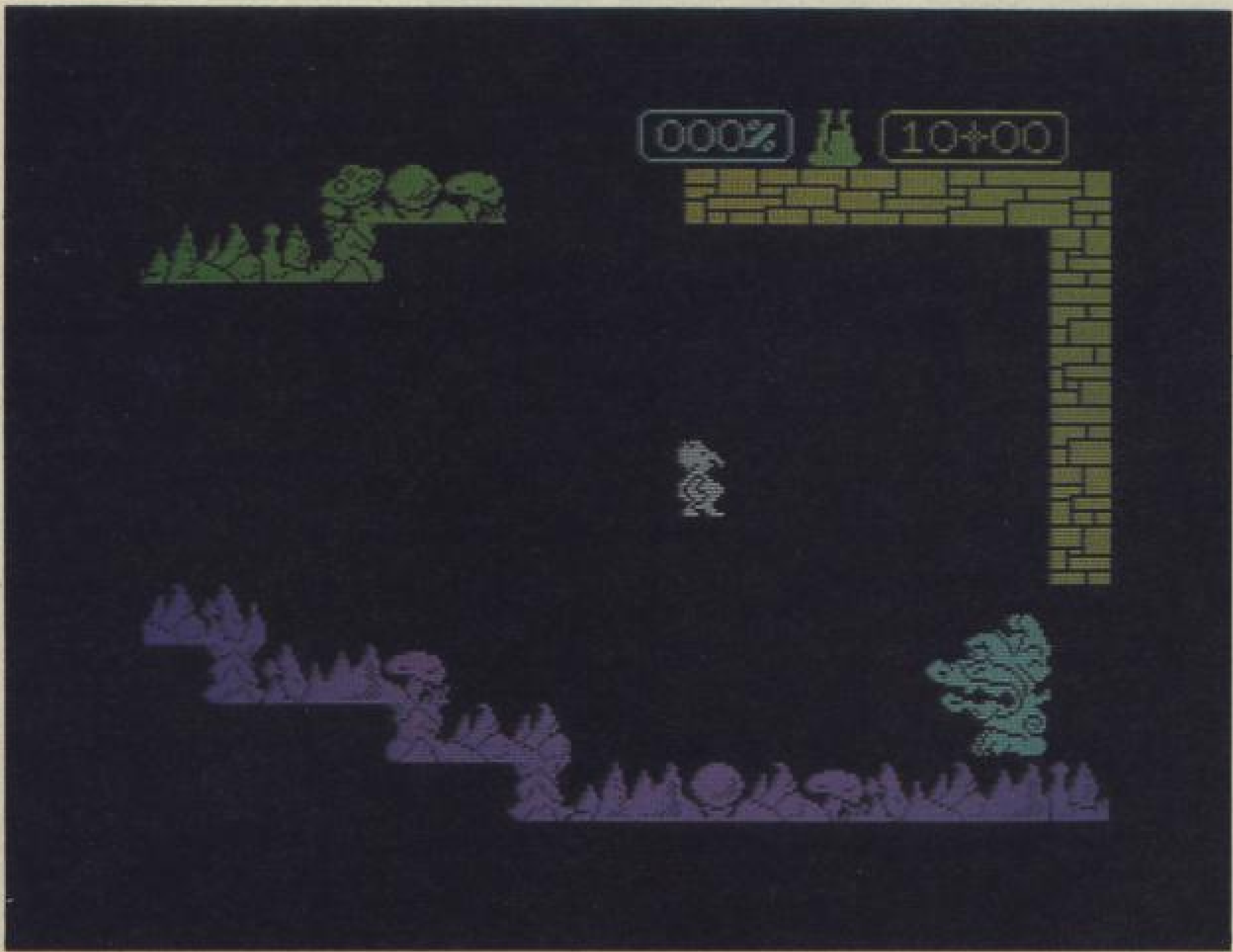
Careful reading of the rhymes on the inlay will give some clues to the puzzles that have to be solved in the game, and a penchant for puns and lateral thinking will also come in handy. Some of the twists and turns in the game are cunning, others corny — and all of the riddles in the game will no doubt seem obvious once they are solved.

CRITICISM

● **'You can't really say that this is a completely original game but there are some aspects of it that are quite strange. 'Pyjamarama-ites' will probably like this one as there are a lot of problems to be solved in a medium sized playing area. Graphically I would rate this game as above average. The characters are well animated and nicely drawn; sound is poorly used there are only a few spot effects here and there. Generally I enjoyed playing** Riddlers Den **but I couldn't see myself playing it next month.'**

● *'There are a large number of arcade adventures available on the Spectrum, with even more being released each week.* Riddler's Den *isn't one of the most impressive of this genre to appear, but then it's not exactly one of the worst. It might have been a better game were it not for the fact that the riddles are a little too obscure at times. They're not in any great abundance either, but I suppose their complexity makes up for this. Other than the riddles there isn't much to keep one enthralled for long, there being little in the any of real action. I find it hard to become stimulated for any great length of time on the strength of solving a few, occasionally illogical, puzzles and I feel that something more is needed to make the game worthy of an honest recommendation.'*

● 'Personally, I like the way that Electric Dreams have gone for the idea behind the game rather than revolutionary programming techniques with this one. The graphics are as good as in earlier Ultimate games and some of the puzzles reveal a great sense of humour — bereft in other companies' more recent attempts. Some people may dis-



like this apparent 'throwback' to the early days, but if they bother to give the game the benefit of the doubt and actually play it for a while, they could find themselves becoming addicted. Lots of lateral thinking puzzles to keep you busy on winter evenings!'

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair, Protek and cursor
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: bright and cheerful
Graphics: colourful, and tidily done
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 49
General rating: a puzzling game. Easy to get addicted to. . . .

Use of computer	77%
Graphics	78%
Playability	80%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	76%
Value for money	72%
Overall	**78%**

CRASH ZX SPECTRUM BACK NUMBERS

fill that CRASH Gap.....

3 April 84	● 'Missile Command' games ● Living Guide ● Sinclair Talks ● Code Name Mat
4 May 84	● The Quill utility ● Graphics utilities ● Microdrive ● 'Pengo' games ● Living Guide
5 June 84	● New Generation ● Jet Set Willy Map ● 'Panic' games ● Alphacom printer
6 July 84	● 3D in games ● Atic Atac Map 1 ● Specgraf ● 'Pacman' games
8 September 84	● Tir Na Nog ● Downsway & Comcon i'face ● White Lightning graphics utility ● Martin Wheeler ● Antic Map ● Design Design ● Lothlorien
9 October 84	● Games Workshop ● Dk'Tronics
10 November 84	● Battlefield Joystick — comparisons ● Deus Ex Machina
11 December 84	● Music Typewriter ● Sureshot j'stick ● Hisoft Ultrakit ● Lords of Midnight Map ● Wanted: Monty Mole Map ● Pyjamarama Map
15 April 85	● London Underground Map (!) ● Designer's Pencil ● Backpackers Map ● Technician ted Map ● Sinclair Story 1 ● Chris Sievey ● Scott Adams ● Mizar ● Artist: David Rowe
16 May 85	● Sports simulations roundup ● Sinclair Story 2 ● Firebird ● Incentive ● Light Magic graphics utility ● music utilities ● Underwurlde Map 1 ● Bruce lee map ● Sabre Wulf Map ● Everyone's A Wally Map ● Artist: Godfrey Dowson
17 June 85	● Denton Designs ● Frankie ● Spectrum surgery ● Sinclair Story 3 ● Knight Lore Map 1 ● Underwurlde Map 2 ● Tape to Microdrive ● Leonardo graphics utility ● Datel sound sampler ● Artist: David Thorpe
18 July 1985	●Gremlin Graphics profile●Artist Bob Wakelin●Sinclair TV●Tape Magazines●Leonardo utility part two●CRASHBACK looks again at games in Issue 8●Gyron map of Atrium●Modems round-up ●And the cover that had the Jehova's Jumping!
19 August 1985	***WITHOUT PAGES 123, 124, 125 and 126. WITH:*** ●CRL Profile●Pull out Oliposter — Fighting Spectrum●Mirrorsoft Profile●Inside the Timex 2068●Round Up of BASIC Compilers●On the Cover Artist Rich Shenfield●Maps of Dynamite Dan and Shadowfire
20 September 1985	●ALIEN 8 and DUN DARACH maps●Electronic Pencil Company Profile●Part Two of BASIC Compilers Round-up●The 64K Spectrum●Design Design Autoprofile, Part 1●Rod Cousens interview
Issue 21 October 1985	●Previews of Marsport, Astroclone, Elite and Scooby Doo ●NODES OF YESOD map ●Holografix profile — how to make a Hologram ●Crashtionnaire analysis ●Platinum Productions profile

Issues 2, 7, 12, 13 and 14 are now out of stock

Back issues are going fast — better get your orders in quick. It's probably worth telephoning if you want to order early issues, as we're getting short. And if you missed Issue 19, we can now complete the gap in your collection with a trimmed down version, which has a tasteful sticker added to the front cover announcing the fact!

BACK NUMBERS SPECIAL OFFERS
- Any three or four issues ordered at the same time — 40p off total
- Five or more issues ordered at the same time — 20p off each item.

PRICES
- Issues 3, 4, 5 and 6, 75p each
- Issues 8, 9, 10, 11, and 15, 85p each
- Issues 16 onwards, 95p each
- ADD 20p per item ordered for Post and Packing
- DO NOT SEND CASH — there won't be enough change to cover the cost of sending your back issues if the Post Office charges us to receive your order!

Name...

Address...

....

Post Code.......................

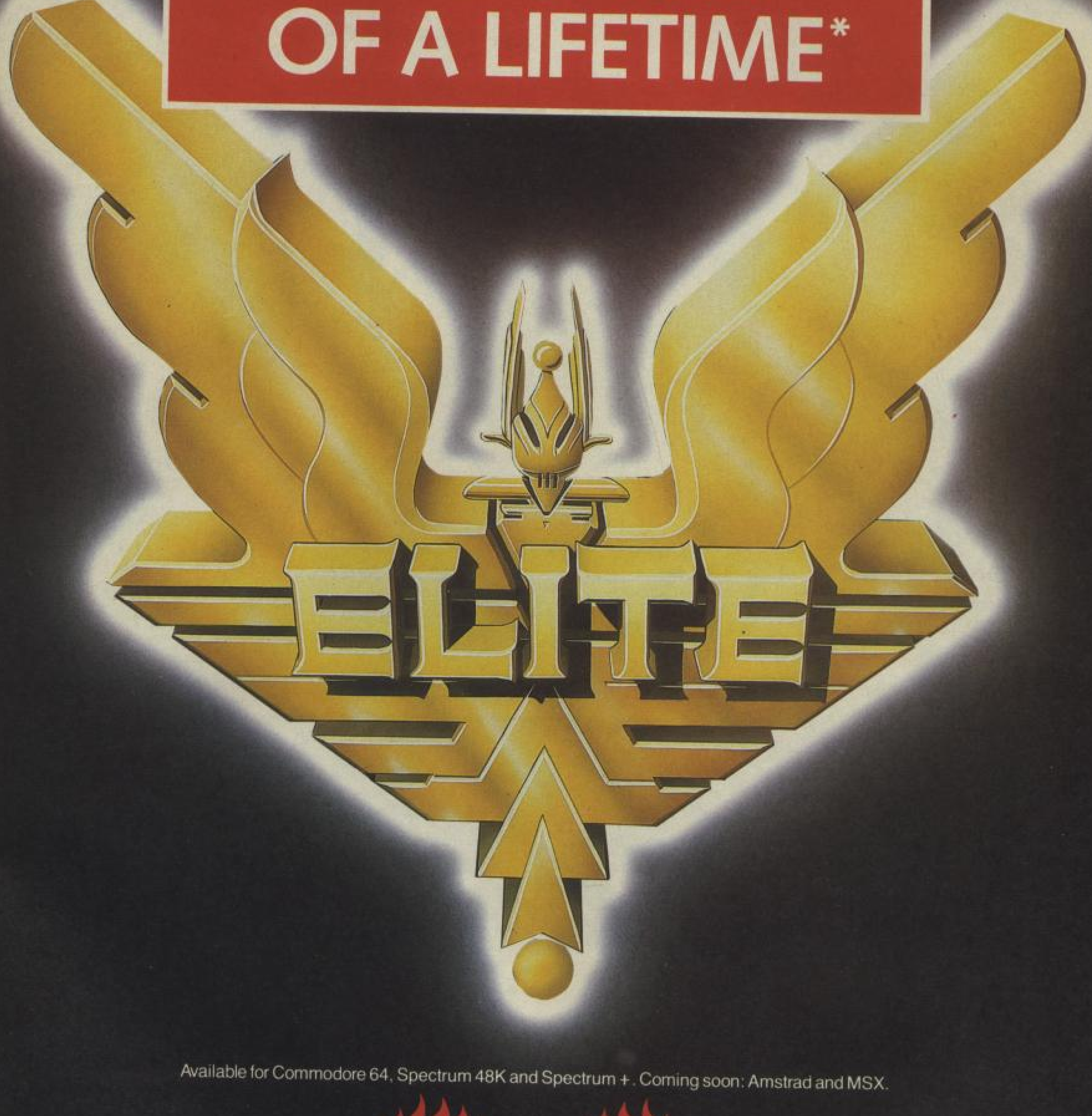
● I would like to order the following issues:

Please tick the correct boxes	Unit	Quantity	Price
3☐ 4☐ 5☐ 6☐	75p		
8☐ 9☐ 10☐ 11☐ 15☐	85p		
16☐ 17☐ 18☐ 19☐	95p		
Total £			
P&P total (20p per item) £			
Sub Total			
Less special offer discount if applicable			
I enclose a Cheque or Postal Order for the TOTAL			

DO NOT pay in cash — cheques or postal order only please, made payable to CRASH MICRO. Please don't include any mail order requests with general post for editorial, competition entries etc as it will almost certainly cause delays. Include your phone number, if possible so Aggie can sort out problems quickly. Send orders to the address below. Thank you. End of Public Service announcement....

BACK NUMBERS
CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

THE GAME OF A LIFETIME*



Available for Commodore 64, Spectrum 48K and Spectrum +. Coming soon: Amstrad and MSX.

FIREBIRD

FIREBIRD SOFTWARE · WELLINGTON HOUSE
UPPER ST MARTIN'S LANE · LONDON WC2H 9DL

GOLD EDITION

*Zzap! 64 Magazine



THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER. Illustration from TALES FOR A WINTER'S NIGHT fairytale collection, used on the 1983 QUICKSILVA Christmas card



ON THE COVER

Susan Rowe has a particular affinity for Wizards — they're one of her favourite subjects. Susan's wizards have illustrated games produced by Quicksilva and The Edge, as well as on the cover of a certain computer magazine by the acronym of C&VG. There's more to Susan than wizards, however. Her work is very delicate and detailed, executed in watercolours — very different from the work of airbrush merchants (such as her husband, David) who are much more common in the software illustrating world.

In the mid seventies Susan Rowe studied illustration at Brighton Polytechnic. Like all the other students on the degree course, she exhibited her work at the end of year show organised by the college for graduating students to display their talents. Susan's chosen specialism was for children's book illustration and she was approached at the exhibition by Roger Dean, a local man who was setting up a publishing business. Immediately after she graduated Susan was commissioned to illustrate *The Water Babies* and she began a successful career as an illustrator working for Dragon's World and Paper Tiger.

Susan became involved with the software industry in 1981 — she produced the painting for Quicksilva's Christmas card and was invited to paint pictures for cassette inlays by the company. *Castle of Jasoom*, *The Wizard*, *Velnors Lair*, and *Mighty Magus* are all included in Susan Rowe's portfolio of Quicksilva covers.

Rather than produce a large expanse of painting and achieve detail by reducing the original, Susan prefers to work small in the first place – her original paintings are generally about the same size as the printed artwork. She works exclusively in watercolours, occasionally using a pen for textures and painting, not surprisingly, on water colour paper. 'I have always preferred working small – I once did a mural for a shop when I was sixteen, but since then I haven't moved away from working close up on a small painting. The largest piece of work I have done recently was A3 size, and that was quite a departure for me!'

Susan's style is suited to detailed work: 'If I produced larger paintings, they would have to be reduced to fit the space allocated for them during printing, and much of the detail would be lost. It would be pointless to work any larger.'

When it come to illustrating a

Forthcoming game from THE EDGE. No prizes for guessing the title!



ON THE COVER

book, Susan is not given a brief which details the scenes the publisher wants illustrating. Instead she will read through the book herself, marking the passages which she feels a child reading the book would want to see in a picture. Illustrating a book can take as much as two years – not that long a time, given that each painting can take three weeks or so. Susan's style



THE WIZARD — QUICKSILVA cassette artwork



CASTLE OF JASOOM cassette inlay

is appealling to children — this is not a deliberate attempt to paint for children: 'I know that children like detail, lots of little things in the corner, and I just draw what I want to once I've chosen the text to illustrate. I don't set out to produce a painting specially tailored for children — I just paint!'

When it comes to illustrating software, Susan takes a similar approach, loading the game and playing it for a while whenever possible. Her interest in wizards and fantasy subjects lends itself well to certain game scenarios . .

Susan is fascinated by literature and art produced at the turn of the century in the Victorian and Edwardian eras and admits to taking some influence from book illustrations produced then. She admits to a strong interest in William Morris who was something of a Victorian Renaissance Man (!) whose decorative influence has had an effect on Susan's work. In this light, it is not surprising to learn that Susan is interested in botany: 'I suppose I'm a bit of a botanist on the quiet, if I'm given the opportunity. For relaxation I'll happily potter about in fields or in the garden — where I grow some of my reference material — just looking at the plants and flowers.

Given her natural talent for detailed paintings and her love for things botanical, it might seem logical for Susan Rowe to produce an illustrated botanical work? 'No, I couldn't. I've no desire to work from life, I'm much happier working on fantasy pictures . . . .'

With two artists in the house (David, Susan's husband acts as her agent as well as producing his own paintings — See CRASH 15, April 1985), do things become a little fraught at times as deadlines approach? 'No, it works very well. If we were working separately, shut up alone for most of the day, it would be easy to get too involved in painting. As it is, we can share artistic problems and paint together in the evenings when the outside world is less likely to interrupt. On occasions we collaborate on a painting, with David doing the airbrush work leaving me to fill in the detail — it can work well. We can communicate as people and as artists and its good to be able to discuss an aspect of the painting you're working on with another artist.

An interesting marriage of talent, Mrs and Mr Rowe. On the one hand the painter of striking and eyecatching large paintings; on the other the meticulous, delicate painter of detail.

THEIR ONLY HOPE WAS YOUR PROMISE TO BRING THEM BACK ALIVE....

BEACH-HEAD II



The continuing saga pits allied forces against the cruel dictator who escaped the destruction of the fortress with remnants of his army and prisoners captured during the land battle.

Produced for the COMMODORE 64 and coming to a computer store near you!

Written by Roger & Bruce Carver • Directed by Bruce Carver • Produced by Chris J. Jones • Distributed by David L. Ashby

Illustration by Oliver Frey (Newsfield Publications) • Manufactured in the U.K. by U.S. Gold.

AMSTRAD £8·95
ZX SPECTRUM £7·95
COMMODORE 64 £8·95



Imagine Software is available from: Boots, WHSMITH, John Menzies, WOOLWORTH, LASKYS, Rumbelows, Greens, Spectrum Shops and all good dealers.

Imagine Software (1984) Limited • 6 Central Street • Manchester M2 5NS • Tel: 061 834 3939 • Telex: 669977